



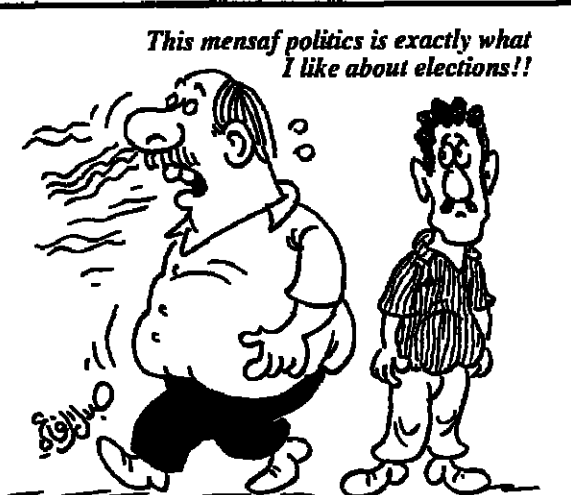
Window on Jordan

Mensaf politics is the true taste of elections campaign

By a Star Staff Writer
DESPITE ELECTION boycotts by some political parties in Jordan, the mensaf season is about to start in Jordan. From now on, and all over the country, aspiring candidates will reach for voters through their stomachs; it's eat before you vote approach. The beginning of the mensaf season marks the unofficial launch of election campaigns leading right to the November elections.

Wherever you go, the country will be in the grips of an election fever that will only subside on the evening of polling day on 4 November.
A Jordanian elections campaign has a distinct local flavor. It projects local values, traditions and tastes, reflecting our very own culture. Whilst it has the trappings of modern election campaigns, Jordanian elections give people that little bit extra.
And it is not only public meetings, the distribution

of leaflets, the publication of paid manifestos in local papers and the hoisting of banners that makes a Jordanian elections campaign. A successful campaign involves the setting up of tents, the mensaf gatherings and offering of traditional bitter Arabic coffee.
Prospective candidates for the next Lower House have already started plotting and planning. With
Continued on page 2



The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
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Les événements internationaux
page 9

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AMMAN, 21-27 AUGUST 1997, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 13, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Dialogue begins but opposition may have passed point of no return

By a Star Staff Writer
WHAT SEEMED as a distant possibility only few weeks ago is now a sure thing. Dialogue between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood has officially started. In fact, the government has suddenly become so eager to talk that it is now proposing to open up the dialogue to all political parties in the country.

Until the Islamists shocked everyone by announcing their historic decision to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections, the government was not in the mood to talk about substantial issues that the opposition now finds challenging the country.

But as opposition parties and professional unions rallied to echo the Islamists' call, the government began to feel the pressure.

And early this week, the biggest blow to government position took place when about 100 Jordanian public figures, including two former prime ministers, announced in a statement that they were boycotting the elections.

It became apparent that the political crisis that the Islamists ignited could not be contained by the government. His Majesty King Hussein rushed to put an end to a situation that was going out of control. In a series of speeches delivered in various governorates, the King called for dialogue and urged the Muslim Brotherhood to reverse their decision. But he also made it clear the dialogue will be unconditional and that the government was in no mood to make concessions.

And so early this week the representative of the Muslim Brotherhood, Overseer Abdul Majed Thuneibat, headed for the Prime Ministry for an initial meeting with deputy Prime Minister Dr Abdullah Nsoor.



The on-going dialogue has become talk of the town

Coming along was the representative of the other opposition parties that had also decided to boycott the elections. General Secretary of the Mustaqbal Party Sulaiman Arar. The government, and the government's main ally in the political arena, the National Constitutional Party (NCP), were enraged. And so a day later, the call for an all-out dialogue incorporating all the parties was made.
It is premature to speculate about the results of dialogue that started between the government Islamists and the opposition last Sunday.
Though talks between these two sides were one day late (they were due to start on Saturday), some observers are still optimistic that they will certainly reach a compromise, as long as they put into consideration the welfare of the democratic course in the kingdom.

Nathir Rasheed, Minister of Interior, stressed earlier that both the government and the opposition still insist on their demands, a fact that implies that success of dialogue requires much more effort and flexibility.
Referring to the results of this meeting Thuneibat, who was accompanied by the deputy general secretary of the Islamic Action Front Dr, Abdullatif Arabiyat said, "we have conveyed our view to the deputy prime minister and told him our approval to the government's call to launch dialogue without prior conditions."
But he added that they did not discuss further details. "We have felt a positive stance from Dr Nsoor on the principle of the dialogue."
But away from the media blitz, the real dialogue will be held behind closed doors.
Analysts stress that reversing the boycott decision depends on what Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali intends to make of the dialogue. Sure enough the much anticipated meeting between Dr Majali and Thuneibat was held on Tuesday at the Prime Ministry.
In statements to the press, Thuneibat said the meeting focused on mechanisms of dialogue, but added that he was neither optimistic nor pessimistic about the results of the dialogue.
In what appeared to be a signal sent to both the government

and the Islamists opposition allies. Thuneibat said that if reasons behind the decision to boycott the elections were removed even partially then the Muslim Brotherhood will reverse its decision.
Spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood Jameel Abu Baker said that "the circle of boycotters to the next elections is getting wider and wider everyday. The boycott stance has turned to be more a popular one."
In this is the case then a reversal of this decision will require an open minded initiative from the government, "to find an end for the crisis," Abu Baker said.
Observers say the positive atmosphere that seems to have surrounded the first and second meetings could be deceiving. They add that good intentions will not be sufficient.
Abu Baker said that "if the government's stance remains restricted to giving assurances, then the dialogue will be useless and is only a waste of time."
But, Thuneibat told the press later that "the original position of the Muslim Brotherhood is to participate in the elections and the boycott is merely a temporary stand."
The government may be ready to send its own signals too. The King said in Taffileh Monday that Parliament will be dissolved soon and officials hinted that this will be happening very soon.
Islamist deputy Abdel Rahim Ukkour said the Lower House should conclude its constitutional term until the beginning of October. But he said the dissolution of Parliament will not affect the ongoing dialogue.
At the table are issues that neither the government nor the opposition can solve now, especially as the process of elections has just started. But observers believe that the government could offer some compromises that the opposition can take

Continued on page 2



BIG CATCH: Royden Eu, left, and Jack Hsu, hold their catch of the day, from Santa Monica Bay in Southern California, which this year is filled with game fish. Experts say it is tied to the condition known as El Nino. Los Angeles Times photo by Genaro Molina.

Venue seeks new ways to defend Jerusalem against Israeli hegemony

AMMAN (Star)—People are still mulling over the significance of the Jerusalem conference in Amman that ends today. Thursday in the Al Hussein Sports City. Titled "Jerusalem 6000 years on, is ours" this is an unprecedented event that will be talked about for a long time to come.

Named the Popular Conference for the Defence of Jerusalem, it is being attended by about 1800 Muslims, Christians, intellectuals, academics, and politicians from all 22 Arab states and 13 foreign states. The two-day venue coincides with the 28th year commemoration of the burning of Al Aqsa Mosque, on 21 August 1969, by an Israeli.

The Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to the 11-party opposition alliance, organized the meeting. An Islamic aura engulfed the first day of the conference, which was not patronized by any state official. This is despite the fact that the preparatory committee of the event earlier met with Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali, which asked if His Majesty the King would patronize the conference. This is according to Dr Ishaq Al Farhan, who headed the committee.

The slogans and goals of the conference do not seem to please Jordanian officials, who have been active in extensive diplomatic efforts to find an exit out of the Middle East peace crises. During the first day of the conference, speeches from the floor totally ignored the peace process, and brought to mind the "old hidden" slogans which at the beginning of the peace process seemed to have become ancient history.

But slogans like armed resistance is the only choice to liberate Palestine [from the river to the sea], was often repeated by speakers. Islamists called it Jihad while the other groups call it armed struggle.

"The only path to prevent Zionist aggression...against the Umma [nation] is to raise the banner of Jihad," said the Overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Mr Abdel Majed Thuneibat. He told participants we "welcome you on the bank of the immortal (Jordan) River which prophet Mohamed fore-saw as where the Jihad battalions will assemble to fight the Jews."

Presiding over the conference was prominent pan-Arabist Christian writer, George Haddad, who focussed on the aggressive mentality of the Jewish extremists in Palestine, and on how they conspire to destroy the holy places in Jerusalem to build Solomon's Temple in its place.

The conference discusses today the "Jerusalem Charter" which pointed out the importance of liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine. The venue has two objectives: Formation of a special committee to discuss an Arab popular strategy for the defence of Jerusalem and devise mechanisms to safeguard the holy places and the Arab rights in Jerusalem. On top of the agenda is a call for a boycott campaign against Israel on all aspects of life.

Israeli jets fire rockets on Lebanon, escalating tension along borders

Combined agency reports and LA Times-Washington Post News Service

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—In spite of earlier assurances that Israel was not seeking to escalate tension along its northern borders, Israeli planes launched three attacks into Lebanon on Wednesday, firing rockets at Hizbollah posts near the Syrian border, a power station and a car, one day after Hizbollah fighters fired rockets into Israel.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri accused Israel of fuelling instability in the Middle East.
Israel confirmed Wednesday's attacks and said the planes dropped bombs near a Lebanese army position as a warning against joining the pro-Iranian Hizbollah in attacking Israel's militia ally in south Lebanon.

Israeli planes also fired a rocket at a water and electricity station complex which feeds south Lebanon's largest city, the port of Sidon.
The Israeli attack came in retaliation of Hizbollah's firing of Katyusha rockets into northern Israel early Tuesday, prompting a warning from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel is prepared to launch massive

retaliatory strikes if the shelling continues. "We will apply a simple formula: If there is no quiet on the Israeli side, there will be no quiet on the Lebanon side," he said during a tour of houses that were damaged in the border town of Kiryat Shimon.

The Hezbollah attack came one day after an Israeli-backed Lebanese militia shelled Sidon, on the Mediterranean coast, killing at least 10 civilians. Netanyahu urged Syria to restrain the Iranian-supported Hezbollah guerrillas, who receive many of their weapons through Syria, from any further attacks. "Syria is able to stop the shooting. It must understand that it is also its interest," he said.

The sudden escalation of tensions along the Israeli-Lebanese border endangered a fragile truce negotiated last year by the United States following a bloody Israeli offensive against Islamic guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon that killed nearly 200 people.

The latest cycle of violence began when three Lebanese youths were killed early Monday by a roadside bomb planted outside Jezzine. The site is north of the section of southern Lebanon occupied by Israeli troops and the South

Lebanon Army, a militia armed and funded by Israel, but it is also under SLA control. SLA forces quickly sought to avenge the bombing by firing artillery shells into Sidon. That attack was the deadliest in southern Lebanon since Israel's air and artillery offensive against Hezbollah in April 1996, and it violated the US-brokered cease-fire in which all parties agreed not to target civilians.

The SLA attack on Sidon, a Hezbollah stronghold, provoked the Islamic guerrillas to retaliate directly against Israel. Shortly after dawn, a twin-barrage of Katyusha rockets slammed into Kiryat Shimon and other parts of the Galilee panhandle near the Lebanese border. Thousands of Israelis rushed into bomb shelters, where they spent much of the day as rockets poured down around them. Several houses sustained direct hits, but casualties were few. Only three people suffered light wounds, according to reports.

Following the shelling of Sidon on Monday, Israel's Defense Ministry renounced any responsibility for the attack and declared that Maj. Gen. Antoine Lahad, the Lebanese Christian who commands the SLA, was operating against the wishes of his Israeli patrons.

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai expressed his "deepest regret" over the shelling and said "attacks of this type are totally against Israeli policy."

Echoing Netanyahu's words, Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, the Hezbollah commander for southern Lebanon, said during a visit to Sidon's hospital to comfort the dozens of wounded that "either there is security on both sides or there will be no security at all."

Zeev Schiff, a leading Israeli military analyst, said he feared Israel was being dragged into another conflict along its northern border by the reckless behavior of its SLA allies. The militia was formed in 1985 to thwart guerrilla attacks against Israel's northern region, but the Lebanese border area occupied by Israel as a "security zone" has become a source of provocation for Hezbollah forces.

Continued on page 2

Russians find new targets for poignant jokes

By Daniel Williams
MOSCOW—Then there was the one about the newly rich Russian who

smashed his car in a terrible auto wreck. "Oh, my Mercedes! Oh, my Mercedes!" he cries.

A passerby notices that the man's arm is missing. "Your car? So what!" he says. "Take a look at your arm!"
The rich Russian gazes at where his arm used to be, then moans, "Ohhh, my Rolex!"
As Russia has changed rapidly in the past six years, so has

its sense of humor. Once, the political joke held sway, the secret jest that jabbed at 70 years of repressive regimes. Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev—especially the doddering Brezhnev of his later years—and Mikhail Gorbachev were the buns of stories told over the kitchen table to close friends out of earshot of the secret police.

But the communist era crashed, and somehow making fun of politicians didn't have the same kick. Or at least not the kick being supplied by the newest wave of humor here: jokes at the expense of New Russians.
New Russians is the name given to the fabulously wealthy, incredibly showy and—the jokes imply—very dumb beneficiaries of Russia's wild brand of capitalism. Jokes about the New Russians are the rage.
Newspapers print them, and published collections are sold at railroad station newsstands. Housekeepers buy cassettes of recorded jokes to listen to while gardening or cooking.
"There's a desire to laugh at the rich and a desire to laugh at the easy money being made in



Old Russians make jokes about New Russians

Russia—even though only a few are making it," said Yevgeny Petrossian, a leading comedian.

"It's a classic defense of the underdog. You laugh at the

INSIDE



Weekend, page 11
The Elvis legacy lives on
Versace legend is about to begin.

Region, page 6
Learning Hebrew in Tehran

Al Hajjar defends his action Israeli farming technology gives Jordanian farm a head start

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

SOUTH SHUNNA—Few hundred meters away from the King Hussein Bridge, which stretches between the two banks of the River Jordan, and on the Jordanian side of the valley is a lush banana plantation that is known among the farmers of the valley as "the Israeli banana farm."

From the outside it is no different from the tens of banana farms that dot the area. But inside it is the first and only Jordanian farm that runs on Israeli hi-tech.

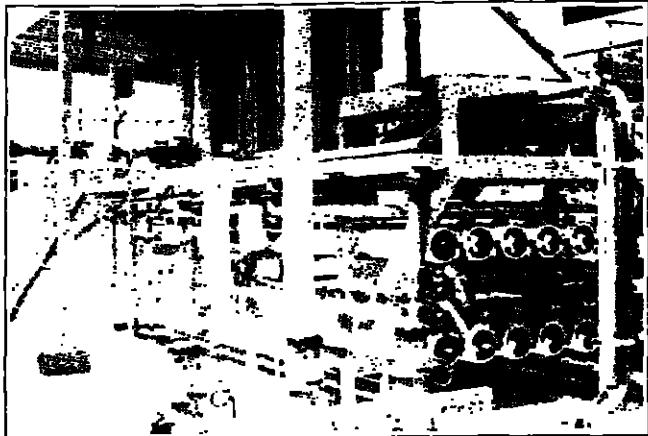
The farm is Jordanian although to many residents of the area the man who runs it, Khalid Al Hajjar, is "a Jew who imitates the Arabs." Others believe the farm is operated and part owned by Israelis who brought in their technology and experience. But the truth is simpler and less dramatic.

Inside the 200-dunum farm, one can see why neighboring farmers look with anger and hidden envy. In one corner there is a room with many equipments linked to a network of irrigation pipes, counters, tanks and other gadgets. This is the heart of the hi-tech farm; a water desalination and chemical fertilizer distribution units.

Egyptian workers scurry here and there to carry out their duties.

The land is owned by a local landowner of Al Adwan family who had leased his plot to a Jordanian businessman and his partner, the young Khalid Al Hajjar.

Inside the nursery, in a small two-room



office, two workers guided us to where Al Hajjar was sitting. The 28-year-old man was taking a rest on a sofa. He woke up and welcomed us in broken Arabic.

For him, the uproar over the project and his use of Israeli technology is uncalled for. "I am not a politician, I am a farmer, you can not mix politics and business, either one or the other," says Al Hajjar. "Politically, I do not like them (the Israelis), many people do not like them, but it is a matter of self-interest."

He says the capital for his farm is Jordanian, the owner is Jordanian and no Israelis are on his farm. "Even the workers who came and put the machines were Israeli Arabs. We asked for that so as to make

communication easier," he adds. Al Hajjar was born in England, he graduated from the University of London with a BA in history. He is originally Jordanian and currently holds British citizenship.

His father had asked him to come to Jordan for a visit three years ago, and then gave him a plot of land to farm in Karameh in the Jordan Valley.

His love for agriculture led him to become involved in other farming ventures and soon he switched from planting tomatoes and other vegetables to banana farming using Israeli improved saplings, and later Israeli farming technology.

Al Hajjar says that the whole idea behind importing technology from Israel is that the farms on the two sides of the Jordan Valley have basically the same land, same weather, same water and same problems.

"The only reason we bought solutions from Israel, is that because they are cheaper," he says. He adds that in reality the Israelis import parts from all around the world and assemble it in Israel.

The Israeli solution has basically solved the water salinity problem, organized the

irrigation and fertilization process. "We in Jordan have a problem concerning water. The water is too salty and you can not use it for anything; not for irrigation and not for drinking," Al Hajjar says.

His banana plantation is irrigated by a computerized system, the water for irrigation is desalinated by a hi-tech machine and the fertilizer is pumped and mixed with water by a computerized system, too.

"You can not really say that it is Israeli technology, but what they did is to put it all together, they modified it to suit our area and that's what they're good at," he adds.

Unlike some other Jordanian companies that deal with Israel, Al Hajjar says, "we paid for the technology, and we told them good bye. So at the end of the day we gained experience, we gained technology, we gained methods, they only gained the cost of the technology."

Since adopting Israeli technology, he says he has been using less water and doubling his production. But he admits that the initial investment in the Israeli solution is high. "But at the end of the day, the increase in production covers the investment cost. It is more profitable and more beneficial. Our local banana is better than imported ones," he maintains.

Al Hajjar is now trying to grow other types of fruits such as mangoes. "We are testing one dunum of mangoes and so far it is working well," he says. "I want to plant seedless grapes and guava and we are looking for other varieties to sell in the local market as well."

He also succeeded in planting the first



cactus farm in Jordan, about 60 dunums, also using Israeli methods.

"I went there [Israel], I took my notebook, and I jotted down notes. I watched everything. I did everything on my own, no Israeli entered my field. You could call it stealing technology, I do not mind," he says.

Al Hajjar is not optimistic about peace prospects in the Middle East. "The peace is not exactly what we expected," he says. "But we have two choices; we can sit in our houses and boycott the Israelis as they come into our country, or we can work with them and benefit for our interest. I think it is better we go out there and benefit from them."

Russians find new targets for poignant jokes

Continued from page 1

New Russian in order to feel superior to him."

Petrov is the author of a collection of Russian jokes told through the years—he had to update the sixth edition to include the New Russian series. "I think the first one I heard—everyone has heard it—was about two New Russians meeting on the street. One says, 'Look at this tie I bought in New York. \$1,500!'"

"What a fool!" answers the other. "Here, you can get it for \$2,000."

Petrov recalled that in 1992 and 1993, there were virtually no jokes. "Things were changing too fast, and times were too hard. No one knew what was funny or not," he said.

But with the flowering of sudden wealth among the few, the New Russians emerged and provided an easy target. Their clothes are distinctive: for men, Italian suits with shoulder pads, a linebreaker would envy; for women, miniskirts and long, high-heeled leather boots. Mercedes-Benz and BMW are the preferred brands of car. Bodyguards are *de rigueur*, and they wear the same Italian suits.

Restaurants for New Russians are opulent and extremely expensive. The other day—and this is no joke—a waiter at an Italian restaurant in Moscow tried to explain why a run-of-the-mill Tuscan wine on the menu was so pricey. "If we list it cheap," he said, "New Russians won't buy it."

Some observers consider the jokes not merely social but politically pointed because of the well-publicized close ties between government and tycoons in Russia. "There is an implied criticism," said Robert Coalson, who writes a column on language for the *Moscow Times*.

Coalson collected jokes for a recent column, and the auto accident tale was his favorite. "That kind of black humor has a long tradition in Russia. Some of the jokes are pretty grim," he said.

In a country in which there is much contemplation of the mysterious Russian soul, these jokes suggest the New Russians have none. An example:

One day, the Devil meets a New Russian and offers him anything he wants.

"I want a license to import anything I want free. I want oil fields. I want tax breaks," the New Russian says. "Now, what do I owe you?"

"Your soul," the Devil responds lustily.

The New Russian scratches his head and thinks hard. "Uh...so what's the catch?"

Poorer Russians—sometimes referred to as Old Russians in the jokes—apparently regard New Russians as criminals. The inference is understandable, given the stream of stories about mafia killings and government-business corruption.

"Have you got a book on how to become rich?" a customer asks a salesclerk.

"Yes, it's called *The Criminal Code*," the clerk answers.

Frequently, the newly rich are portrayed as oblivious to the impoverished country around them. When an Old Russian beggar complains he has not eaten for three days, a New Russian replies, "Really, that's not good for you. Force yourself!"

The surge of New Russian jokes doesn't mean jokes about other well-known aspects of Russian life have disappeared. Bad service in stores and restaurants provides continuous material. "Waiter!" shouts a customer. "Give me a toothpick."

"It's busy," the waiter replies. Okay, okay, here's a Brezhnev joke. Russians still love them. Like the one about the time Brezhnev was reading the opening speech at the Moscow Olympics. "Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh," he said.

An aide leaned over and whispered, "Leonid Ilyich, those are the Olympic rings. You aren't supposed to read it!"

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Mensaf

Continued from page 1

tents already put up as far away as Mafrak in the north, and in Maan, Tafleh and Karak in the south, people will now experience a big Jordanian feast that will end only on 4 November.

Mensaf gatherings are the ultimate in the wheeling and dealing rituals: where the pledge for support by the fol-

lowers of the clan or tribe is sanctified. Without the ubiquitous mensaf, candidates will be at a loss of what to do to pump up an election campaign.

Mensaf of course is a traditional Jordanian dish consisting of thin layers of bread, marinated with broth and steaming goat yoghurt providing the foundation on which a bed of rice and large chunks of meat cooked in yoghurt, known as the *jameed*, sit. The mensaf is served in large trays where people can eat with their hands

collectively. There is no cutlery to speak of. People eat with their hands, standing around mensaf trays. Eating with the right hand is no easy task for a novice. It is an art that cannot be mastered overnight. But mensaf gatherings provide an ideal platform for candidates to meet their prospective constituents and discuss issues of importance to both sides. Such gatherings are like opinion polls, providing raw information on people's sentiments and voting trends.

The mensaf gatherings cannot end until bitter Arabic coffee is served. It is said that Arabic coffee is good to your health since it forms a lining to one's stomach to drain fat and cholesterol, especially after mensaf.

Mensaf politics is not a sophisticated tool but apparently it is very effective. Candidates resort to the mensaf tactic regardless of their beliefs, education and constituencies. It is about reaching people at the grassroots level.

The mensaf season comes every four years and voters look forward to it, expect it and demand it. And why not? For the coming few weeks, until election day, eligible voters will be cajoled, pampered, fed, and wooed as never before.

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Dialogue

Continued from page 1

back to its followers and declare victory. These include a temporary freeze of the controversial Press and Publication law, which the government had passed as a temporary law two months ago. The government can promise such a suspension until an elected Lower House looks into it.

The government can also promise to review the one-man-one vote electoral system, but only after the elections. It can promise to look into adjusting existing administrative divisions.

It can also provide assurances that the coming elections will be free and fair.

But other than that it is not expected that the government will have a mandate to make additional concessions. Issues like normalization with Israel and amending the Constitution are high policy decisions that rest only with the King.

It is then up to the Islamists and the opposition parties to decide if these compromises justify a reversal in their boycott decision.

But with the boycott trend in fashion, especially after the statement by the 100 independent Jordanians, it is feared that the opposition may have crossed the point of no return.

Jerusalem

Continued from page 1

Some even suggested the establishment of a fund to support Jerusalem. It could have an annual budget of about \$1 billion.

Several participants could not attend, but sent solidarity messages. Some Palestinian opposition leaders based in Syria—Ahmad Jibril, of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, was not allowed entry into the country. However, two Palestinian

Damascus-based Marxist leaders are attending: Dr George Habbash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Nayef Hawatmeh of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The organizers invited about six Arab-Israelis but some could not make it. Leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel Raed Salah was prevented from crossing the bridge into Jordan. Edward Said the famous Palestinian intellectual and a critic of the peace process, was not able to attend because of health problems.

Prince Rashid recuperates

His Royal Highness Prince Rashid Ben Al Hassan is recovering at the King Hussein Medical Centre in Amman, from injuries sustained in a car accident that took place while he was accompanying an American friend on their way from the Wadi Araba Highway to Aqaba last Friday.

The accident took the lives of his aide-de-camp, Maj. Salamah Kassab and Mark Schmidt.

Also injured was Zeid Omar Bdeir who is recovering from his injuries. Doctors treating the Prince and Mr Bdeir say that both are in good health and described their injuries as minor.

Prince Rashid was visited by His Majesty King Hussein, directors of Medical Services and King Hussein Medical Centre and senior officials.

Their Royal Highnesses, Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath received cables of best wishes for Prince

Rashid. Officials and popular sectors in Jordan wished the Prince good health and complete recovery.

Venue seeks to bridge English and Arabic teaching in universities

THE FIRST International conference on Arabic-English Contrastive and Comparative Studies is being held at the University of Jordan on 23-27 August. Many lecturers from all over the world are giving papers on literature, translation and linguistics. In addition to the large contingent of English professors from Jordanian universities, there are many from Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Tunis, Algeria, Malaysia, England, France and the USA.

The venue is divided into different sessions over. Some include such topics as reflections on translation in Koranic idioms, poetry according to Wordsworth and its relations to Gibran, learning language as a foreign language, linguistic contrasts and the idea of Arabic in the English class. The purpose of the venue is to show the set of contrastive and comparative ideas necessary for building a bridge between the Arabic and English languages.

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The British Institute at Amman for Archaeology & History mourns the passing of

Mrs Diana Kirkbride-Halback on August 14th 1997 in Denmark

As an archaeologist, she devoted her life to the Middle East and in Jordan to work at Jerash, Petra, Wadi Rammi and Beidha

مركزنا من الأثاث

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Grooms in jail

Five newly wedded men spent their first night of married life in a Ramtha prison cell last week. The police moved in after a stray bullet hit a five-year-old boy who was at home at the time. Because gun shots were also heard in four other wedding parties, the respective bridegrooms had to pay the consequences. Police quickly snatched the grooms leaving their brides to carry on by themselves. Relatives were angered by what they regarded as drastic police measures. The Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) said the arrests, all in one night, were unlawful. In a letter sent to Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali the organization stated it was clear that the police, having failed to catch the culprit who fired the stray bullet, arrested the grooms. This is an action that is against Islamic Sharia, and indeed against the country's Constitution whose article 8 states that a person can't be arrested unless he violates the law, the letter added.

Drugs worth JD 1 million seized

The anti-drugs squad has seized more than 22 kilograms of heroin at a street value of JD 1 million. Two men were arrested. They wanted to smuggle the heroin to neighboring Arab countries. The latest shipment was brought into the country by a foreign man, in a secret hideaway inside his car. This is the biggest shipment caught since June when the squad seized 47 kilograms of heroin and opium at a street value of JD 6 million.

...and cigarettes also caught

About 12,000 cartons of smuggled foreign cigarettes were seized by the Customs Dept. earlier this week. This was a joint operation carried out in cooperation with the Anti-Corruption Directorate. But smuggling of cigarettes seems to be widespread. Days before, the department has confiscated 66,000 cartons of cigarettes after an operation that lasted three hours of car chasing where fire arms were used.

Consolidation, the name of the game

The government is going full speed head. First it was insurance companies, then travel agencies, then newspapers and now taxi bureaus. The government has an economic philosophy and that is aimed at concentration and consolidation of capital. As of last week, new taxi firms in Amman must put up JD 1 million in order to operate. The government has been more kind to taxi firms in Zerga and Irbid. They must put aside only JD 500,000, whilst for the rest of the country, it is JD 250,000. This is not registered nominal capital, but it has to be paid in full.

Murder solved

A murder was solved eight years after it was committed in Irbid. On 25 August 1989, the Irbid police was notified by a man that his wife had gone missing. After much investigation, the police couldn't find clues to the whereabouts of the missing woman. Eight years later and on 12 August 1997, police received information that a human skeleton was found in one of the caves near Irbid. With the skeleton, police found the remains of a dress and traces of bullet holes. The Irbid prosecutor and the coroner later concluded that the skeleton belonged to a woman who was killed a number of years earlier. After looking into their files, a suspect was brought in for interrogation and later he confessed to murdering his wife on the day he reported her missing.

Banner of anti-normalization

The Jordan Writers Association (JWA) is angry at its Arab counterpart, the Syrian Arab Writers Association, for meeting with members of the Israeli Knesset and representatives of the Israeli press. The Israeli delegation had recently concluded a visit to Syria. In a statement released last week, the JWA considered the meeting as a step along the slippery slope leading to normalization with Israel. Further, officials in the association point out such meetings are a clear violation of the code of honor that Arab intellectuals signed and approved by the secretariat of the General Union for Arab Writers.

Doctors Association finds culprit

A good while ago it was found that JD 724,000 went missing from the coffers of the Jordan Medical Association (JMA). After much investigation by the Anti-Corruption Directorate, it was found that the money was pilfered by a number of employees who have since left the association. According to JMA President Dr Bassam Al Dajani, the culprits siphoned off the money through the computer.

Angry nurses

Nurses are angry at the recent Ministry of Health decision to cut their wage package by JD 5 per month. Ministry of Health officials say that since the nurses are now receiving allowances for after-hour work they are not entitled to a free lunch. The JD 5 is supposed to make up for the free meal. The Nurses Association has since issued a statement rejecting the latest decision which they say is a part of a general policy that could lead to cuts in such things as housing and transport allowances. The association has sent a letter to Minister of Labor Saleh Al Khasawneh threatening industrial action if the Ministry of Health decision is not reversed.



His Majesty King Hussein said that Shura is the basis for dialogue and the respect of the other opinion. Addressing a rally in Tafleh, the King reiterated that the elections will be held on their constitutional date, and on a democratic and fair basis. The King added "the door is open for anyone, from any place to come and monitor the elections process because we want others to learn and to see how the people of Jordan lay the foundations of the democratic march and their future." The King's visit to Tafleh comes as part of this tour to the Kingdom's governorates.

S. Korean Ambassador in Amman bids farewell Calls on Jordan to open embassy in Seoul

By Marwan Asmar
Star Staff Writer

DIPLOMACY AND foreign relations are crucial to bring countries closer together. These are the things that the South Korean Ambassador to Jordan, Jung-il Oh sought to implement during his tenure in Jordan, which has just come to an end.

Mr Oh, who is a veteran diplomat of many years, has become Ambassador to Jordan in March 1994. Since then great things have happened in the relations between Jordan and South Korea.

The ambassador, who has a BA in Political Science since 1968, says that in the area of foreign policy Jordan has been most helpful to South Korea. It has for instance given much support to his country at the United Nations, especially in its bid to gain a non-permanent status member of the Security Council.

The support today is mutual, for South Korea is also extending support to Jordan on the international level, the ambassador continues.

However, nowhere this support has been more important than on the local level. While his country imports a lot of potash from Jordan, the trade exchange is understandably tilted considering the industrial status of South Korea.

Korean products especially cars and consumer durables are found on a large scale in the Jordanian market. But economic and technical cooperation is being consolidated between the two countries. Korean experts have been working on agricultural and waste water projects in Wadi Al Sir, Madaba, and Ramtha. For the last project, they have finished a feasibility study and presented it to the Ministry of Water. There will now be a bidding on the project as soon as the ministry puts out the tender. The ambassador says Korean companies will be among the international bidders.

But this is not all, during his tenure, many South Korean folklore groups were staged in Jordan. This has helped in establishing a cultural link as Jordanians were introduced to traditional Korean folklore and customs.

Jordan still does not have an embassy in Korea. Mr Oh says that this is the next step that Jordan should be thinking about because it's a good way of promoting the Kingdom abroad.

The number of Korean tourists who visit this country is very small compared with those going to Cairo and Israel. This is helped by the fact that there are direct connection flights between Seoul, Cairo and Tel Aviv.

The ambassador says "Jordan is not known to many Koreans." He says what is needed is a greater campaign to promote Jordan in that part of the world.

Despite the fact that as a diplomat he has travelled the world and served in Cambodia, Canada, London, Libya, Iran and Ghana, he was on fertile ground when he started his service in this country.

Quite frankly, he says, "I didn't know you have the most of the wonderful places like Petra and Jerash." He adds that these as well as the many historical sites should be promoted.

As to the peace process, he says that history is going in the right direction. Despite the current setbacks in the peace process, Mr Oh says that "a process has begun" and it will continue through "trial and error." He adds that dialogue is very important to produce a comprehensive peace.

Referring to great challenges for his country he says "we want to continue to develop our social, economic and political system to face the era of globalization." He wants unity with the North [Korea] but says that this should come about peacefully. "peace must precede unification."



Ambassador Oh



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(News Item: Celebrating 50 years of independence from British rule, India still faces economic, ethnic and political problems compounded by a growing population of one billion.)

Our Say...

A way out of the crisis

THE BEGINNING of the much awaited dialogue between the Muslim Brotherhood and the opposition parties, on one side, and the government on the other is the first practical development in weeks on the road to defusing the political crisis that threatens the credibility of the upcoming elections.

Regardless of how one feels about the conditions set by the Muslim Brotherhood weeks ago for their participation in the November elections, the fact that opposition parties, professional unions and even independent political figures have now joined the march to boycott the polls is an indication that the country is passing through a dangerous political crossroads.

The call for dialogue, made by His Majesty the King and received positively by the opposition and the government, is a step in the right direction—if the intentions are good all around that is. Dialogue for the purpose of dialogue will not bring solutions nor will it put the democratic process back on track.

For the dialogue to be effective there must be an agreement on common foundations and references. The Constitution and the National Charter make up these foundations and references. The people are also a part of the on-going dialogue, which has now been expanded to include all parties. As such the responsibility to make this dialogue a success gains much more importance. In short it has to succeed. Failure to reach a common ground will only deepen the political crisis and widen its effects on the whole society.

For the dialogue to bear fruit, the government and the parties must be clear about their common agenda. If the credibility and fairness of the coming elections is to be secured, the government should provide necessary assurances to make that process as transparent as possible.

Other issues on the table cannot be solved immediately. The opposition, primarily the Islamists, has left room for negotiations. There are signs that given the right environment, both sides can move away from brinkmanship and into honest and sincere dialogue aimed at reaching a solution.

The government should not isolate the opposition or close the door for compromises. It can and should lead the country out of the current crisis. It can and should facilitate the way for all political parties to contest the coming elections if we are to maintain a healthy democratic system.

On the other hand, the opposition, led by the Islamists, has a responsibility to offer practical and workable solutions. Pragmatism is needed now, and while their message and that of others has reached the people, the time now is to make initiatives and restore unity.

Both sides should remember that their dialogue takes place when Jordan and the region are facing mounting political and economic challenges. The need for reconciliation should rise above political score keeping. Both sides will be judged by the people once their dialogue is over. ■

Legislation aims to stamp out political influence of Islam

By John Barham

TURKEY'S PARLIAMENT approved a controversial education law designed to stamp out the political influence of Islam in schools.

Islamic activists staged noisy protests across Turkey but failed to block the legislation, which was passed by 277 votes to 242 last Saturday after three days of debate.

The chief provision of the law, a critical battleground between Islamists and the secular establishment in NATO-member Turkey, extends the time children must spend in compulsory state secular education from five years to eight.

The Islamists, led by the opposition Welfare party, say the new law will mean many children who currently transfer after five years to state-funded religious schools will no longer be able to do so.

But Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz accused Welfare of treating religious schools as training grounds for its activists. "[Welfare] wants to preserve the schools to raise new militants for them," he said.

Necmettin Erbakan, Welfare's leader, said the law was "a product of fascist secular thinking that

challenges the will of the people." He promised to challenge it in the courts.

In June, the army forced Mr Erbakan from power as Turkey's first Islamist prime minister for resisting its demand for secularist reforms that included an extension of compulsory education.

The reforms, first proposed nearly 25 years ago but resisted by Islamists, are widely supported by the secularist majority, which fears that gradual Islamist infiltration of the schools will brainwash their children.

The reforms will begin to take effect during the next school year, which starts in September. The government calculates that Turkey will need almost 200,000 new teachers and 150,000 new classrooms to accommodate about 800,000 new pupils a year.

The total cost is expected to be more than \$6.3 billion, spread over three years. The government is imposing new taxes on alcohol, tobacco, mobile telephone users and lotteries to raise part of the money, and plans to approach the World Bank and other lenders for additional finance. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Arafat facing 'democracy' test

By Avi Machlis

WHILE MR Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority, may be contemplating his next moves in the standoff with Israel ahead of a visit next month by Mrs Madeleine Albright, US secretary of state, he faces another impending deadline.

The Palestinian parliament recently issued an ultimatum, demanding that Mr Arafat dissolve his cabinet by the end of September in response to reports of financial mismanagement and corruption.

"This is a real test for Palestinian democracy," said Mrs Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian minister of higher education, in an interview with the FT.

The reports have aroused concerns among Palestinians and donor countries about accountability in the nascent government. However, the very fact the Palestinian Legislative Council, or parliament, boldly issued its report and fingered several senior Palestinian officials marks an important step for Palestinian democracy.

In its report the PLC appealed to Mr Arafat to replace his cabinet with a new council of technocrats and experts. Palestinians now await his next move after 16 out of 18 ministers resigned in response to the report.

"The legislative authority is taking its role seriously," said Mrs Ashrawi. "It is holding the executive authority accountable, has exposed certain shortcomings and violations and has demanded rectification."

The outcome of this process would determine "whether we are going to build a democratic future or a centralized, perhaps unaccountable, system that sees the preservation of power as being the objective rather than safeguarding and protecting the people's rights," she added.

The process began last May, when Mr Arafat sent the Palestinian General Control Office to carry out an audit of Palestinian finances. The auditing commission found the authority squandered \$326m in 1996, or 40 percent of its budget.

Two follow-up commissions were formed, one set up by Mr Arafat, a second comprised of nine PLC legislators. The highly detailed legislators' report released last month named several ministers suspected of alleged gross violations and made detailed proposals for rules and regulations aimed at creating a transparent and accountable system.

The PLC publicised scathing charges against several leading Palestinian officials. Mr Yasser Abd-Rabbio, who holds two ministerial portfolios, was charged with siphoning off \$26.851 (\$7,600) from his ministry of culture budget to pay for the installation of a central heating system in his home. Mr Nabil Sha'ath, minister of planning, was accused of setting up a slush fund, paying less for projects than agreed in contracts. Both have denied any wrongdoing and were the only two ministers not to sign the cabinet resignation.

The PLC has noted that the auditors' report was not comprehensive. Mrs Ashrawi points out the \$326 million figure did not distinguish between funds lost due to financial violations and unrealised revenues resulting from policy decisions.

Nevertheless, the practices "damaged the PNA's reputation and credibility with funders," said the report, to stop assistance to it.

But Mr Hikmat Zeid, a member of the PLC inquiry, has appealed to donor countries to focus on efforts being made to deal with what he cautiously calls "mistakes."

"We are a new Palestinian Authority,"



he said. "We are in the middle of an Arab world and the Middle East, and aside from Israel we are the only country in this area that is democratic and has a high level of transparency."

The democratic awareness Mr Zeid refers to is firmly rooted in grassroots Palestinian society. According to a poll taken in June by the Center for Palestine Research and Studies, 62 per cent of Palestinians believe corruption exists in official institutions and 52 per cent backed a vote of no-confidence in Mr Arafat's cabinet as a response.

But Mr Zeid's trust alludes to one weakness in the Palestinian drive to institute a system of checks and balances: the inquiries refrained from investigating Mr Arafat's security services or his office. And although Mr Arafat appears to be supporting the quest for accountability, one Palestinian official admitted the reluctance to open the files in the office of the revered president was due to "political sensitivity."

Experts say much of the current situation is linked to Mr Arafat. In the three years since the authority was founded, they say, a system of patronage common in the Arab world has evolved alongside the drive for democracy.

For now, the PLC has put on hold a

no-confidence vote its ultimate weapon as it awaits the president's response. Mr Zeid said the PLC's goal was not to clash with the executive, especially during the current crisis in the peace process. "When the political crisis is over," he said, "I trust that the president will personally respond to these issues."

The drive is also vulnerable to the ups and downs of the peace process. Since Israel still has overall control of the economy, land and security, said Mrs Ashrawi, "even our best laid plans can be instantly nullified by an Israeli measure."

Meanwhile, the deterioration in the peace process has sparked discussion in the Palestinian cabinet on whether to drop the internal debate for now to avoid weakening Mr Arafat during the political crisis.

But Mrs Ashrawi disapproves of this strategy. "I believe that if you are credible internally and accountable internally, this is a source of internal strength and empowerment. It will help us face external challenges," she said, adding the majority of ministers agreed.

"I believe it also strengthens Arafat's hand," she added. "If you lose the people's confidence, you cannot lead."

Financial Times Syndication

A chip off the old block

A Chip Off the Old Geek Block, by P. Bronson
Reviewed by
Michael Thompson-Noel

PO BRONSON'S first novel, Bombardiers about Wall Street investment banking was a planetary best-seller. All the more reason, then, to warn you, as you head for summer beaches, not to snatch up Bronson's second novel, which is strictly for geeks and nerds. It is as flat as a chip, as dull as Bill Gates. On second thoughts, Gates would have to be livelier.

In an author's note, Bronson says that when he told people in Silicon Valley he was writing a novel about the computer industry, many wanted to know if it was about Bill Gates. "A lot of people," says Bronson, "wanted me to bring [Gates] down, but I was more interested in writing about today's [computer] entrepreneurs than today's moguls."

The reason he was more interested in entrepreneurs than moguls, he says, is that a lot of enterprising people in Silicon Valley are attempting to weaken Gates' grasp on the computer industry's levers of power by undermining the near monopoly on desktop operating systems that Gates has established.

Fair enough. So Bronson gives us Andy Caspar, a would-be "Ironman" geektalk for big man in Silicon Valley who is languishing in the basement of

a distinguished research lab. The lab's chief engineer sets Caspar an intriguing task: a long-neglected project to design a cheap computer, one that sells for only \$300.

The \$300 computer project is about populism and democracy, no less, producing a computer for the poor, huddled masses of the world that doesn't cost more than other small home appliances: TV sets, microwaves, stereos.

That is enough of a plot, I imagine, to grip geeks by the throat and send them howling round the room in bulge-eyed excitement. For non-geeks, it simply isn't dramatic enough, at least in Bronson's hands. And hey: there is almost nothing resembling sex, or even geeky rep-

lication. That is truly unforgivable. The UK version of this book has a picture of a guy who is said to be Bronson,

looking really cool and hunky. But I believe Bronson is a chip. ■

Financial Times Syndication



(News Item: For the first time in U.S. history, President Clinton used a line-item veto striking down 3 of the 79 items in the balanced-budget accord Congress sent him last week.)

Middle East East Cyprus!

EFFORTS TO bring peace, have reached other part of our region, both the Greek-Cypriot community, and the Turkish are inching closer to solving their historic dispute.

But like almost all negotiations in the region, tend to bump into obstacles right from the start. It is amazing, and amusing, to see the placard describing the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia (or should I say Lefkosa) as being the last divided capital in Europe. All of a sudden, Cyprus is in Europe, and the geographical term "Europe" indicates anything but a geography.

Of course, when Nicosia is described in European terms, its status as a divided city becomes less acceptable than of its reality in being part of the Middle East. However, there are also other tangible reasons for displaying this placard, mainly, perhaps in anticipation or wishful thinking of accepting the offer of the EU to join their exclusive club.

For indeed, the EU has offered the whole of Cyprus to join the "Union." Peace negotiations over the geographical unity indicate the first step. But it should be remembered there are more variables involved in this formula than the simple agreement of both leaders of the two communities. For a start and on a mere visual level, the commemorative ceremonies of the 1974 Turkish military operations are remembered differently. The Greek-Cypriots mourn the loss of life and lands in what they call a Turkish military invasion, while the Turkish Cypriots celebrate in a show of military paganism, remembering what they term as a peace operation. Therefore, there will be more to consider in Brussels, than the offer of financial prosperity to both communities.

Admittedly, the Greek Cypriots are more enthusiastic about the EU's offer than their Turkish partners. Apart from the obvious reasons of economic prosperity and freedom of mobility, Greece, the main supporter and outside partner of their kin in Cyprus, is an active member of the EU. Logically, membership of the same union will bring them closer together.

For this particular reason, the Turkish community is suspicious about the whole offer. Turkey, the main sponsor of the North Cyprus/Turkish Republic, is still outside the EU, and there is a genuine fear within the Cypriot Turkish community, that their rights and gains, will be lost if Cyprus becomes a member of the EU, without Turkey having joined it.

Again, the plot thickens with the fear that Greece will be able to achieve through the EU, what it could not achieve in war and conflict: Unity with Cyprus. Though the current Greek-Cypriot leadership is politically mature, and much experienced in international as well as inter-communal affairs, the history of relations between both communities have often been marred by the Turkish phobia of (Enosis), union with Greece.

This had been on the cards of the island's politics since before the days of independence from Britain, with the activities of the Greek organisation (EOKA) commanded by Grivas. This notion of Enosis had led in the past, to the various pogroms and inter-communal violence culminating eventually with the coup against Makarios, by Enosis supporters in 1974. It prompted the Turkish invasion of the island and the consequent topping of the military Junta ruling Greece.

No matter what can be negotiated in Switzerland, between the leaders of both communities, the idea of joining the EU cannot bypass the heavy shadows of both Greece and Turkey in the formula of Cyprus. Although there is a pull towards a solution involving a federal structure for a united Cyprus, there are many things that still need to be ironed out, and most probably, must be looked for, from outside the island itself. ■

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كانا من اول اول

Business scene

■ Jordan Steel Co. sales jumped during to JD 6.17 million the first half of this year. Net profits rose to JD 811,000. The company's balance sheet showed a growth of 17% in assets compared with the same time last year. They recorded JD 26 million against JD 22 million. Jordan steel has been granted a loan worth \$2.2 million to finance purchases of equipment necessary for its Aluminium factory.

■ Total revenues of the Jordan Electric Power Co. reached JD57.6 million during the first half of this year. The company's net profits in the same time rose by 59% to JD 1.08 million compared with the same period last year, according to the company's mid-annual report. The company is giving intensive efforts to curtail operations expenditure and carry out its projects within the budget available.

■ Jordan National Shipping Lines generated profits estimated at JD 372,000 over the first six of this month this year. By last June, the shipping lines balance sheet showed a rise of 3% from 1996, to reach JD 21 millions. The fleet of the Jordan National Shipping Lines comprises three bulk carriers, a multi-purpose vessel and a stake in a ship for transporting passengers and cars. Moreover, the lines charter other ships annually if there is need to cover additional activities. Its fixed assets are estimated at JD 6.6 million.

■ Mid-annual pretax profits of the Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Co. recorded a rise of 30.5% this year to reach JD 3.28 million. Its sales during the first half of this year stood at JD12.1 million showing an increase of 50% compared with the same period last year. This company which is a pioneer in pharmaceutical products in Jordan, plans to boost its capacity to meet the increasing demand of its products to Gulf markets in addition to North Africa, East Europe and Malaysia. The Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Co. was the first Jordanian company to obtain the ISO 9001 for its high standard.

Foreign Exchange Wednesday, 20 August		
	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFR	0.4801	0.4825
FFR	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LYR (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Resumption of Iraqi crude exports seen as a cause for oil price decline

AMMAN (Star)—Since last June, Iraq suspended its oil exports to the world. This marked the end of the first phase of the oil-for-food deal endorsed by Iraq and UN last December.

Iraq has made it conditional to link the resumption of its oil exports with the renewal of the deal and the UN approval of its plan to continue the distribution of foodstuffs and humanitarian aid in Iraq.

According to the deal, Iraq is allowed to export crude oil worth \$2 billion every six months, in exchange of basic needs and imports of food items and pharmaceuticals.

Early this month, after a delay of 60 days, the UN Sanctions Committee has announced its approval to renew the deal for six months more, starting from 8 June, to 8 December this year.

Though Iraq has called on the UN to take into account the loss of the June-July period, and the start from August, the UN has rejected a demand.

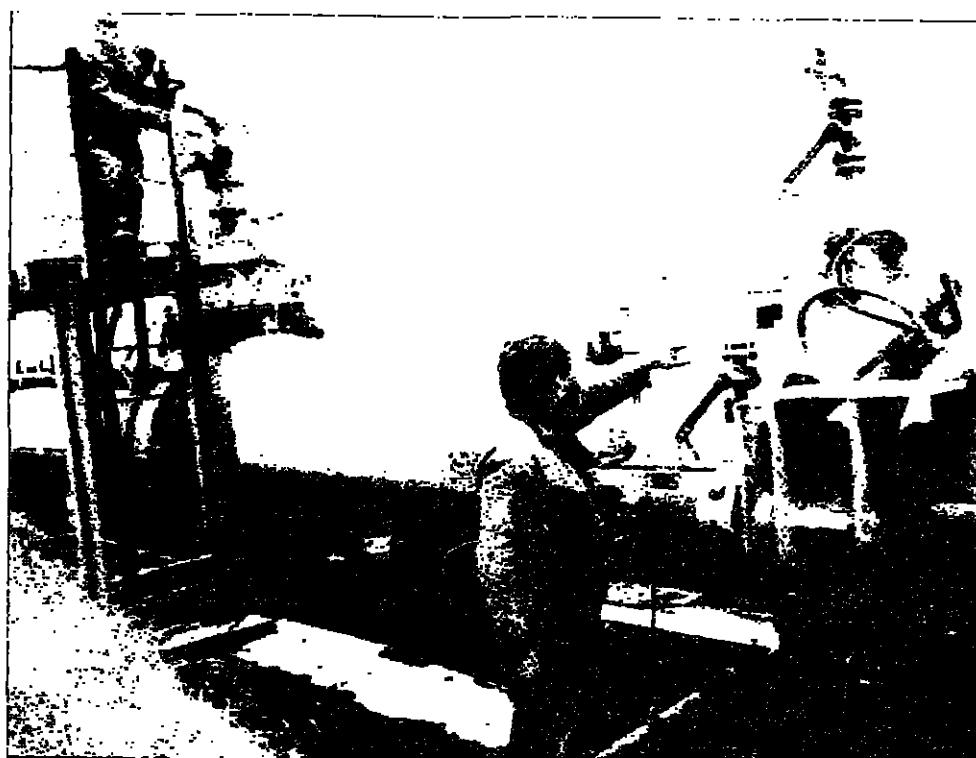
But in order to compensate for the loss, Iraq plans to go as fast as possible on the allowed oil exports before the fifth of next September.

The renewed oil-for-food deal allows Iraq to export crude oil estimated \$2.14 billion over 180 days. These are divided into two phases.

The validity of each phase is 90 days. This means that Iraq should sell oil worth \$1 billion before September, or else it will lose its stake.

Oil experts express fear that Iraq intends to sell its whole stake during next month, that is 1.6 million barrels per day.

So, the main question which bothers the international oil markets today is focused on the volume of oil Iraq intends to



Turning on the oil tap: Experts fear that there will be a world oil glut this time around

export by next September. Some analysts expect an oil glut in the market, hinting to the possibility of a reduction in oil prices.

However, optimistic oil market dealers stress that an Iraqi crude oil marketing firm had assured them that the talk about a dumping strategy in the market is baseless and it is premature to give final word on the issue before Iraqi oil exports start.

This firm promised foreign importers to pump only about 700,000 to 800,000 barrels of crude oil per day. But a representative of an American concern which signed a contract

with Iraq in the first phase of the deal does not see any harm in the exporting of the whole stake of Iraqi oil.

Iraq now has about 10 million of oil reserved in the Iraqi Al Bakr port and the Turkish Silhan port. It is capable of exporting 1.3 million barrels a day.

With the implementation of the second phase of the oil-for-food deal, approaching its scheduled date, Iraqi officials stress that, this formula is still a violation of Iraqi sovereignty

and say that Iraq will do its best to reach a complete lifting of UN sanctions imposed on the country since 1990.

However the UN officials see it the other way. One official describes the first phase of the oil-for-food pact to be a "moderate success," as it managed to provide Iraq with two-thirds of its needs of food and pharmaceuticals.

The UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, the Swedish Stefan De Mestora said that during the first phase Iraq received 1.3 million tons of food and drugs, out of a total of expected 2 million tons.

De Mestora added that the UN 986 resolution relating to the oil-for-food deal is beneficial and stressed that, before this resolution, Iraq was only

able to import 86,000 tons. During the few coming days, Iraq is expecting 30 vessels carrying foodstuffs to arrive at the country, according to an Iraqi daily.

Though the most beneficiaries from the oil-for-food deal are seen to be American Petroleum companies, the UN has lately approved 18 contracts to export Iraqi crude oil given to Russian, Italian, French, Turkish, Spanish and Austrian oil firms.

Until now, the approved Iraqi exports reached about 90,02 million barrels. The first shipment of oil started last Monday.

As for Jordan's stake from the oil-for-food deal, Jordanian officials expect the process of implementing the second phase of the deal to run more smoothly and easily than the first.

Dr Mohammed Bani Hani, secretary-general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade said that Jordan is in contact with its representative in the UN to facilitate the approval of Jordanian contracts in coordination with the UN Sanctions Committee.

Intensive contacts are going on these days in Jordan between Jordanian and Iraqi high level officials to move rapidly in this process. Also, Jordanian companies are making contacts with the commercial attaché in the Iraqi Embassy to prepare for tenders to win food, drugs and detergents export contracts for Iraq.

In the light of the first phase of the deal Jordanian companies won contracts worth about \$100 million out of \$120 million.

Dr Bani Hani hopes that these contacts will rise in the second phase to reach \$200 million.

Business Chronicle

The curse of the summit

THE MUCH talked about fourth MENA summit to be held in Doha next November has divided the Arab world into two blocs. While Qatar is determined to hold the summit (supported by some countries) Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon, the UAE and Morocco are urging her to either cancel the conference or at least delay it. This situation seems similar to that which preceded the last Cairo summit. The core of the old-new dispute is as usual Israel's participation in the venue. Though many Arab countries have gone far in normalization with Israel, relations continue to be affected by political setbacks in the peace process.

The UAE-based daily *Al Itihad*, called on Arabs—instead of sitting with Israel on the same table—to convene an emergency Arab summit, unite ranks and try to reduce the sufferings of Palestinians and Iraqis.

But there is really an ironical twist to the tale. Iraq which should be treated as an integral member in the Arab body, is being isolated, while Israel (despite its intransigence and hardline policy on the Palestinians) is welcomed by some Arab states and invited to their meetings.

The UN-imposed sanctions on Iraq since 1990 have nearly devastated the country, exposing its economy to critical factors. Also the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is causing the economy great losses. So the only option for Arab countries today is to put their house in order and pay greater attention to pan-Arab cooperation and enhance mutual economic ties to face global challenges.

This situation has lately revived the old dream of the Arab common market which was launched in 1964. This idea has long faced difficulties that blocked the way in front of any positive step to Arab integrity. Inter-Arab trade exchange—at 10 percent—is far below our aspirations and hopes.

Had the common market been established, it could have succeeded in unifying customs tariffs, and liberalize the movement of capital and manpower among the member states. Syria is now leading the revival of this forum suggesting it as an alternative for other regional gatherings.

Some cynics argue that such call is targeted at marginalizing the MENA summit conferences that began in 1994 within the framework of the peace process. However, supporters of the Arab common market stress that pan-Arab action is the only way out of all economic crises in the region as long as Israel does not abide by its commitments.

By inviting Israel to these regional conferences, some say we shall be allowing her to penetrate Arab ranks, and dominate the area.

Some experts warn that if the sanctions imposed on Iraq continue after the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is not eased, the situation will worsen. Inviting Israel to the next summit conference in Doha will also create more regional divisions and lead to different kinds of economic crises and bottlenecks in production. This would result in making our markets into dumping grounds for Israeli products. What is also worrying about this situation is that it could come about slowly and unexpectedly.

The Gulf Cooperation Council is still not letting up so fast. It will hold a further meeting next September to discuss the impending situation. However, a Gulf diplomatic source says that he is not optimistic about such a meeting. The same source adds that Qatar is being pressured by the Americans to hold the summit on time, which is not surprising.

PNA's boycott to Israeli products expected to widen

AMMAN (Star)—As the Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip continues for the third consecutive week, the Palestine National Authority (PNA) finds itself obliged to take counter measures.

It's now selectively boycotting Israeli products as a reaction to the latter's insistence not to ease the closure.

Israel calls on the PNA to take stiffer measures against radical militants who are accused of responsibility for the latest double suicide bombing in an Israeli market in occupied Jerusalem.

But such measures taken by PNA is seen by many as "like warm". Dr Labeeb Qumhawi, a political analyst told *The Star*, "The PNA action is subdued and cosmetic because the gravity of the impact of the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian territories has far exceeded the proposed measures which are related only to certain Israeli goods."

Qumhawi called on the PNA to take this as an opportunity to declare this "Paris Accord" concluded between Israel and PNA as "null and void." He describes this accord as a means to consolidate Israeli economic control of Palestine and the Palestinians.

As for the political aspect, Qumhawi says "it is, Netanyahu who [effectively] declared

the Oslo peace agreement dead. Because of this "the PNA, has to take such a declaration as an opportunity to mobilize world opinion to exert pressure on the Israeli government to honor its commitments towards the Palestinians."

Impacts of the Israeli closure on the West Bank and Gaza affected share dealings on the Palestinian Stock Exchange (PSE).

The market was weak, and is at its lowest level. PSE general director Safwan Al Batayneh described the share market as "dead" and stressed that such situation is because of the blockade and the Israeli security siege imposed three weeks ago.

"Workers are hindered from arriving at factories and some companies suffer from problems facing the import of raw material, as well as export," Batayneh said.

PSE started stock dealings early this year with about 20 companies enlisted. Due to the closure, shares of only seven companies were exchanged.

Share prices of five of these have gone down while those of the remainder were stable.

Judy Dempsey of the *Financial Times* adds that Israel started to release payments owed to the Palestinian National Authority which were suspended this month because

of the bombing. The decision to release \$44.2m (\$12m), or about 30 percent of the financial transfers owed last month, was made after Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, consulted his foreign and defence ministers.

A statement from the prime minister's office said the decision was based on "partial cooperation" by the Palestinian Authority in investigating the suicide bomb attack, and its swift arrest and sentencing of three Palestinians for the murder of an Israeli taxi driver last week.

The US welcomed the partial thaw. "We welcome any Israeli effort to reconcile the Palestinian economy's well-being with their own understandable concerns about security," an official said. The US and European Union had criticized the withholding of financial transfers, which include customs and excise duties, VAT returns, income tax and health insurance fees, paid by Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements.

Diplomats said the measures were counter-productive and could lead to further tension in the West Bank and Gaza, where unemployment is as high as 35 percent. The financial transfers are used to pay the public sector.

A tradition falls, land rents rise in Egypt

By John Daniszewski

SINAYER, Egypt—Here in the timeless lushness of the Nile Valley, where peasants pour the river's life-giving waters onto the dark, silty soil to bring forth a bounty of cotton, dates and corn, trouble is coming.

It is not a plague of locusts or a flood, perils these lands have known since the time of the pharaohs.

No, it is a piece of modernizing legislation—enacted by the Egyptian parliament in 1992—calling for a new law of land ownership, one that would allow peasants to own the land they have worked for generations.

For Egypt's peasants, the humble fellahs, these are strange times. In the 1950s and '60s, during the rule of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, when socialist ideals marched triumphantly across the Third World, they were promised low, government-set rents and tenure for themselves and their heirs on the land.

Forty years later, the pendulum has swung. The reigning philosophy now is free-market economics, and long-suffering landowners are eager to get back control of their property.

The tefallah—a pillar of Egyptian tradition—see the new law as a threat to their very existence.

"We won't leave the land, and we will slaughter them if they come to take it," threatened Mohammed Ali, a tenant farmer in Sinayer, a village in Beni Suef province three hours' drive south of Cairo.

In the past, farmers such as Ali might have counted on Egypt's fabled inertia to ensure that nothing would change. But now, they are confronting a government bent on accelerating market reforms with an alacrity that some might deem un-Egyptian. Officials are racing to privatize businesses, reclaim desert land, upgrade the infrastructure and attract foreign investors.

The government, which estimates that its policies led to 5 percent growth in the 1996 gross domestic product, now dreams of becoming the economic tiger of the Mediterranean.

So it is no wonder that in the countryside, emotions are boiling. Blood has been spilled—at least seven people have been killed in rioting—and the law's opponents are warning of a peasant uprising if the measure takes effect as scheduled 1 October.

The new law was aimed at rectifying an anti-owner bias in Nasser's sweeping land reforms.

Until Nasser, Egyptian agriculture had been characterized by a quasi-feudal system in which large estates were worked by impoverished peasants whose livelihood depended on the whim of the owners and their overseers.

Nasser broke up the large plantations, nationalizing the biggest estates and banning anyone from owning more than 200



Egyptian fallahs, pillars of tradition seen new law as threatening their very existence

acres. Tenants were given the right to till the land where they had lived in return for a nominal, government-set rent, and this entitlement could be passed down to their descendants.

The new legislation, Law No. 96, was passed in 1992. It included a five-year transition period during which annual rents were to be raised in stages until they reached 22 times the real estate tax on the land. During the transition, land leases could be terminated voluntarily if tenants were compensated by landlords; otherwise, tenants could renew their leases, but at new, higher market rents negotiated with landlords.

But few tenants have taken either option. In this village, most peasants claim that they had no idea that the new law was coming, and now many dread the prospect of eviction.

Ali said the 1 1/2 acres he and his family farm annually for about \$175 feeds 18 people, and that all will starve if they must leave the land. He fears that his landlord will evict him under the new law, or demand at least twice as much money, a rent he says would be far beyond his means. (No one really knows what will happen to rents on the free market, but government experts contend that increases will not be so steep because the rents have already been raised to fair market levels.)

Ali's neighbors had similar tales, and vied with each other to report who had the tiniest plot with the largest family; some asserted that they cannot pay even the relatively low government-mandated rents now.

Ahmed Ibrahim, Ali's brother, tugged angrily at his soiled robe, saying it is the only garment he owns. Their mother, Kar-

ima Said, 58, stood amid the ripening cotton plants and complained, "Am I to be a beggar on the streets?"

Authorities reject such concerns. They blame what they term a needless panic on leftist political parties, which philosophically oppose economic reform, and Muslim extremists, who are eager to exploit any discontent in their aim to bring about an Islamic state.

"Most of the fears (about the effects of the new law) are quite exaggerated," Ahmed abu Zeid, the ruling National Democratic Party's parliamentary leader, told the country's semi-official weekly newspaper, *Al-Ahram*.

Defenders of Law No. 96 say it makes vital corrections in the landlord-tenant relationship, actions necessary for Egypt to have a rational, modern economy. Supporters also contend the measure will ensure that Egypt's land is more productive than now, divided as it is into a multitude of tiny plots unsuited to mechanization. This is a critical concern in a country of 61 million where virtually the entire population is crowded onto a narrow strip of irrigated land that runs along the Nile and through the desert.

According to government estimates, up to 6 million people depend on the tilling of rented land to live. In theory, these people could be evicted if landowners took advantage of Law No. 96 to repossess their property.

This possibility leads some analysts to question whether, at least on this aspect of his economic reforms, President Hosni Mubarak's pro-market government is moving too fast.

MARKET WATCH

16-19 August

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<p>↑ 5.19 5.09 4.98</p> <p>↑ 2.94 2.86 2.52</p> <p>↑ 164,570</p> <p>↑ 129,718</p> <p>↑ 637,263</p> <p>↑ 164,010</p> <p>↑ 74,3039</p> <p>↑ 608,071</p> <p>↑ 163,970</p> <p>↑ 83,1225</p> <p>↑ 759,900</p> <p>↑ 164,010</p> <p>↑ 129,718</p> <p>↑ 637,263</p>	<p>↑ 5.26 5.49 5.03</p> <p>↑ 4.88 4.81 4.00</p> <p>↑ 164,010</p> <p>↑ 74,3039</p> <p>↑ 608,071</p> <p>↑ 163,970</p> <p>↑ 83,1225</p> <p>↑ 759,900</p> <p>↑ 164,010</p> <p>↑ 129,718</p> <p>↑ 637,263</p>	<p>↑ 5.29 5.31 5.15</p> <p>↑ 5.06 5.31 5.00</p> <p>↑ 163,970</p> <p>↑ 83,1225</p> <p>↑ 759,900</p> <p>↑ 164,010</p> <p>↑ 129,718</p> <p>↑ 637,263</p>	<p>↑ 4.67 4.71 3.91</p> <p>↑ 4.37 3.57 2.84</p> <p>↑ 164,010</p> <p>↑ 129,718</p> <p>↑ 637,263</p>

Beating of 2 Palestinians continues cycle of violence

By William Drozdiak

BETHLEHEM, occupied West Bank—By Tuesday, Ahmed Mousa sensed the time had come for drastic action. Trapped inside the last West Bank village sealed by an Israeli military clampdown following a suicide bombing in Jerusalem, the 30-year-old Palestinian decided to circumvent the siege to seek medicine for his heart condition.

He was joined by a cousin, Mahmoud Gneim, who wanted to collect money from his employer in Talpote, near Jerusalem. The two youths sneaked through a wooded area near the main checkpoint until they were spotted by an Israeli border patrol.

Police took them in a jeep to a highway underpass. Mousa was taken aside and beaten with sticks and stones. "They pointed an M-16 rifle at me. One of them said, 'Don't shoot him, just cut off his ears and hands and leave him here to die.' But they let me go," Mousa recalled.

Gneim was beaten with clubs and stomped until he was covered with blood. Then a rope was tied around his left foot and attached to the jeep. The driver accelerated and he was dragged along the ground for about 200 yards. "Why are you coming to Israel?" he remembers one of tormentors saying. "Let Arafat find you work. Let Hamas feed your children. Get up before I shoot you." They were referring to Palestinian National Authority leader Yasser Arafat and the militant Islamic group Hamas.

The harrowing experience, which Mousa and Gneim described as they lay in an intensive care ward at a hospital here, has already become a rallying cry for acts of retribution among more than two million Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

It is also another depressing turn in the cycle of violence that batters every transient hope for an enduring Middle East peace. Since two suicide bombers blew up a Jerusalem market

July 30 killing 14 people along with themselves, the spiral of hate has endangered the 1993 Oslo peace accords once hailed as a blueprint for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.

While a majority of Israelis applaud the sanctions as proof of their government's determination to extract full cooperation from the Palestinian Authority in fighting terrorism, it is clear from a tour of West Bank towns and conversations with Palestinian residents that the measures have infuriated them and widened the chasm of mistrust.

Immediately after the bombing, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu banned entry of Palestinians into Israel, clamped severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods in Gaza and the West Bank, and held up the transfer of more than \$40 million in tax revenues and customs duties owed to Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

Since the Oslo peace deal, the Palestinian Authority says the losses caused by sporadic closings of the West Bank and Gaza have reached nearly \$2 billion. The US Embassy in Israel estimates living standards in Palestinian areas have plummeted by about 40 percent since the famous handshake on the White House lawn between Arafat and Israel's prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was later assassinated.

"People are suffering in ways they never experienced during the worst days of the intifada," said Jamal Gubran, a Bethlehem gold merchant, referring to the Palestinian uprising that triggered an



Israeli crackdown in the late 1980s. "They come in here ready to sell anything of value—a ring, a necklace—just to get enough money to eat."

Netanyahu has vowed the sanctions will not be relaxed until Arafat proves his willingness to cooperate in stamping out terrorism by rounding up Islamic militants and dismantling their support systems. Arafat argues he is doing all he can to fight terrorism and complains his people are being subjected to collective punishment even though nobody is sure the suicide bombers came from areas under his control.

"Instead of fighting terrorism, he (Netanyahu) is fighting the Palestinian Authority," Arafat told a crowd of supporters in Ramallah on the West Bank. "He is acting in the interests of the terrorists (because) he is giving them a strong base." Israeli authorities have eased the ban on movements inside

the West Bank for all towns except Bethlehem—which remains sealed because a bomb factory was discovered recently that is believed to belong to Hamas. Israeli officials say they hope the extra punishment will turn residents against the terrorists. But talks with Palestinians indicate the sanctions are backfiring because they are deepening resentment toward Israel.

"They single us out because we live off tourism and they want to kill our economy," said Nader Ghataf, a local shopkeeper. "So now people can't work, they can't feed their families, and they are only getting more bitter. How can you expect them to believe in peace when we are so much worse off than before?"

On a nearby hill, tractors and bulldozers are busily clearing land for a Jewish settlement known as Har Homa to Jews and Jabbal Abu Ghneim to Pal-

estinians. The government's decision in March to push ahead with the project provoked Palestinian protests.

Bethlehem Arabs dismiss the bomb factory explanation as a smoke screen. They insist the real reason they are being subjected to harsher punishment is because Israelis want to make their lives so unbearable that they will abandon their town to Israeli developers at Har Homa who are eager to exploit Bethlehem's potential to reap larger profits from Christmas pilgrims.

"What the Israelis are doing is simply not humane," said Victor Salama, a pharmacist. "This is nothing less than ethnic cleansing. If people are trying to drive you out of your home, is it any wonder that you may feel driven to desperate actions?"

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Rift among Jews continues to simmer

By Rebecca Trounson

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—His Conservative Jewish adherents have been branded "terrorists," "Nazis" and "Christians."

Rabbi Ehud Bandel doesn't mince words, either. It's a hot summer in Israel, he says, and it presages an even hotter fall. Israeli police forced Bandel and about 200 other Conservative Jewish men and women away from the Western Wall last week after they began praying together, provoking an angry response from hundreds of strictly Orthodox Jews. The Conservatives, some weeping, were forced to leave the area, jeered by scores of bearded, black-clad ultra-Orthodox, whose practice forbids women from praying with men.

The confrontation, which pitted Jew against Jew in the shadow of one of Judaism's holiest shrines, came as thousands gathered to mark Tisha B'Av, a solemn day that commemorates the destruction of both the first and second Jewish Temples.

"On this day of all days, it was a lesson in hatred without a rightful cause," Bandel said, citing a traditional account that internal discord caused the destruction.

But Orthodox leaders accused the Conservatives of provocation. "They came there to tease the religious," said Rabbi Avraham Ravitz, a member of Parliament from the United Torah Judaism Party. "Did they think the wall was a nightclub, where men and women had to be together?"

The incident was yet another indication that a divisive debate between Orthodox Jews and members of Judaism's more liberal movements is heating up. A committee formed in June to find a compromise on the issue of Jewish conversions is reportedly in danger of falling apart. And new controversy rages over the appointment of a Reform Jew—the first ever—to a municipal religious council in Israel.

At the heart of the battle is whether the Orthodox establishment will continue to hold a monopoly over Jewish conversions in Israel, which allows them to define who is a Jew and determine which converts qualify for Israeli citizenship. Another factor, however, is an increasingly determined struggle by Reform and Conservative leaders here to gain official recognition for their movements. The two groups are relatively small in Israel but represent the majority of American Jews.

"The larger picture behind all of this is whether the state of Israel is going to recognize only one branch of Judaism as the legitimate expression of Jewish tradition," said Rabbi Uri Regev, a leader of the Reform movement in Israel. "Or is the state going to be open to all Jewish thought and practice?"

Tensions have risen over the religious issues since last year, when Orthodox political parties made an unprecedented showing in national elections and formed a critical bloc in the ruling coalition. Since then, they have used their political clout to promote a bill that would formalize an existing status quo, giving Orthodox rabbis sole authority to perform conversions in Israel.

In June, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reached an agreement with Reform and Conservative leaders to work out a compromise on the bill by the end of the year. But earlier this month, the committee working to resolve the dispute bogged down and reportedly near collapse. Reform and Conservative leaders said they feared a failure to reach a compromise would lead to the revival of the conversion bill, which passed the first of three required readings in the spring.

But the modern movements have scored a number of recent legal victories, including an Israeli Supreme Court decision earlier this month that Joyce Rosman Brenner, a Reform Jew, should be allowed to serve on the religious council in the city of Netanya. The decision provoked outrage among Orthodox Jews, some of whom labeled the 57-year-old former New Yorker a "Trojan horse" who will destroy the council from within.

Local religious councils oversee various religious services, including the operation of synagogues, the certification of kosher food and some educational activities.

Ravitz said the attempt by Brenner and her backers, including the far left Meretz Party, to win a place on the Netanya council is aimed at "trying to change our Jewish identity."

"They believe that Judaism is not a religion with absolute ideas," Ravitz said. "They say it should be like the Protestants, which allows all different ideas."

Brenner, a professor of social work affiliated with New York's Yeshiva University, agrees—in part. Her aim, she says, is to offer people a choice, a pluralistic society in which various approaches to Judaism are tolerated. "Reform and Conservative Jews are also concerned about religious issues," she said. "We should have the right to express our Judaism in our own ways."

But the religious parties, with government support, have plans to bypass the court's ruling. Ravitz said they will soon propose a law that will allow only Orthodox Jews to be appointed to the nation's religious councils.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Jews in Iran continue the circle of faith

By Ann LoLordo

TEHRAN—In this Islamic city, children are learning Hebrew. Seated at tables in a synagogue, boys and girls diligently copy the alphabet into workbooks. A bright-eyed 5-year-old proudly announces, "aleph," as her pencil draws the first Hebrew letter.

Mothers sit at a long table nearby. Each holds a worn copy of a Hebrew prayer book, the body of divine knowledge and law of the Jewish people. They take their turn to read aloud the prayers of their ancestors.

"The Hebrew language is an entrance to understanding Torah," says Houshang Elyassian, the 58-year-old manager of the largest synagogue in Tehran. "They have to learn how to speak, how to write... If they do not, they will not be alive in the future. They must continue this circle."

The Iranian Jewish community is among the oldest in the Middle East. Most of the Jews of Syria, Iraq and other countries hostile to Israel have long since fled. But despite Iran's strong enmity toward Jerusalem, Jews here continue to live

among their Muslim countrymen and practice their faith.

They worship in 40 synagogues across the country. They operate schools, bury their dead in their cemeteries, perform marriages under a wedding canopy, dine at a kosher restaurant, own a hospital and nursing home.

Iran's Jewish population numbers about 30,000 people, down from about 67,000 in 1970. Two factors encouraged emigration: the establishment of Israel in 1948, and the fall of the American-backed regime of Shah Reza Pahlavi in 1979. The Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ushered in an era of drastic social change.

Regardless of their religion, women are compelled to conform to the Islamic dress code—the tent-like swath of material known as a chador or a headscarf and long coat that covers everything from the hairline to the curve of the ankle. For 18 years, the Jewish women of Iran have been so attired in public. But in private, at their religious celebrations, they are free to dispense with the rules of Islam.

Jews drink wine at a bar

mitzvah, the ceremony at which a young man accepts the responsibilities of an adult. Women dance with the father of the bride at a wedding—whether they are related or not. Their sons can discuss a Persian poet with teenage girls at a meeting of a Jewish youth group.

If Islamic rule has restricted certain areas of life, it has strengthened some Jews' commitment to live more observantly.

"It got more important after the revolution," says Nahid Elyassian, who observes Kosher dietary laws, walks to synagogue on the Sabbath and sends her children to Jewish schools. "My parents didn't feel the need to send me to Jewish schools. But I feel the need."

In Tehran, there are four Jewish elementary schools, four secondary schools and two high schools. But the Iranian ministry of education administrators the schools, the principles are Muslim and the only Hebrew spoken is during the four hours of theology taught weekly by a member of the Jewish society.

At the 110-bed Jewish hospital, most patients are Muslim. "It's a big pride for the Jews to be providing for their fellow Muslim citizens," says Parviz Yashayaei, a film director who oversees the Jewish Society of Tehran.

The society is located on the third floor of a nondescript building that also houses an Iranian tax office. A mezuzah, an ornament containing a tiny prayer scroll, appears on the door posts in accordance with Jewish law.

"Although after the revolution there was this hot subject of Israel and the relationship with Iran, from the religious aspect of the government, they have always been extra kind and considerate of the synagogues," says Yashayaei.

He presents a visitor with a letter sent to the head of the Iranian community from president-elect Muhammad Khatami. "I hope that with the help of God and the friendliness and cooperation of all of the followers of the godly religions, we will be more successful in achieving the high goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Although Jews freely practice their religion, lay members lead the congregations. The last ordained rabbi who worked here left several years ago and

has not been replaced. But all that is necessary for services is a group of 10 men, a "minyan."

The Jews have their own seat in parliament—the member takes the oath of office using the Hebrew Bible. But their lives are affected in other ways because they live in an Islamic theocracy. Jews cannot hold a top position in the government.

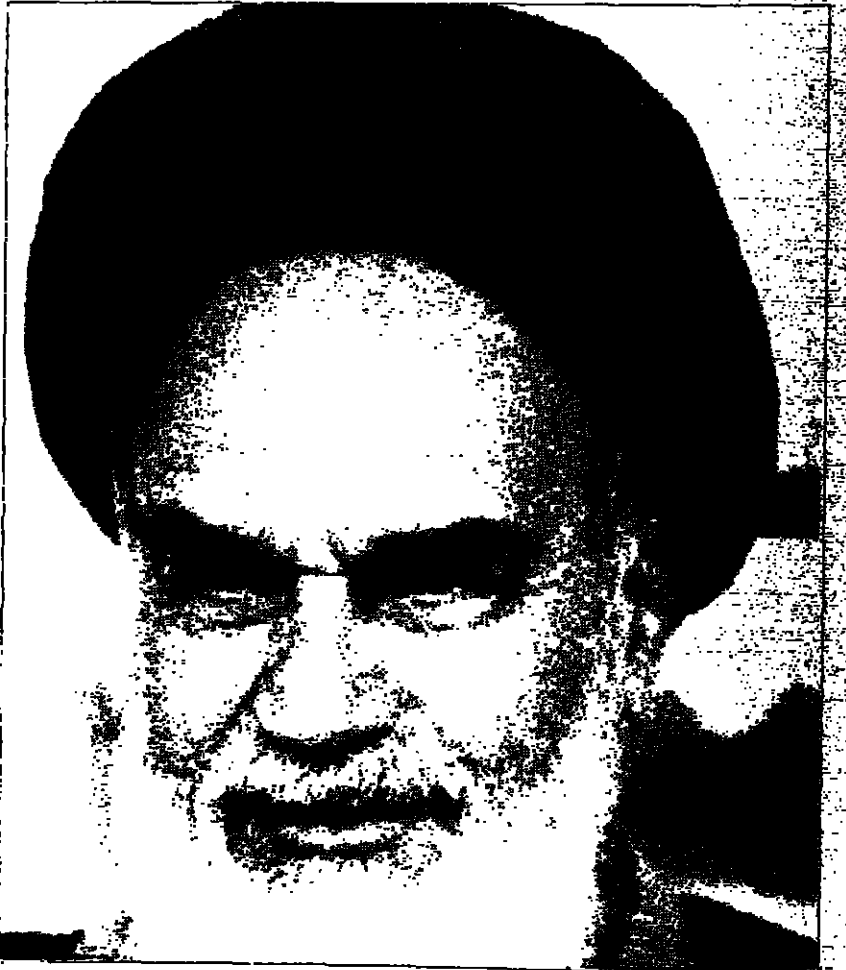
They faced similar restrictions before the revolutionary Yashayaei says. And yet, says Yashayaei, the real problems facing Jews may occur in the day-to-day dealings with the bureaucracy. Jews may have a harder time receiving permission to publish a book or receiving a speedy trial because of a Muslim's "own grudge, attitude or prejudice," he says.

In the past, Jews had difficulty getting permission to travel outside of the country. But Yashayaei says, "Now it's OK unless they have personal files or problems, which can happen for a Muslim or anyone."

But a trip to Israel can result in the confiscation of their Iranian passport.

At the Jewish Women's Organization of Tehran, Farangis Hassidim briefs club members about the international women's forum held in Beijing. Hassidim attended the conference as part of her country's delegation and spoke about Iranian Jewish women.

Although they cannot leave Iran without their husband's permission—a rule of law here—the Jewish women said they



Despite the Khomeini era of social change, the rights of the Jewish community have been maintained.

were better off than Islamic women.

"We have more freedoms really," says one club member.

But when a visitor inquires about Israel, the response is "We don't talk politics."

"Jews are quite comfortable here," says Nahid Elyassian, 46, mother of three children. "We don't get top jobs in government but we are quite free living, in our synagogues, in our prayers."

On a recent Friday, as dusk colors the Tehran sky a warm shade of mauve, members of a downtown synagogue arrive for evening services. On the way in, they pass a picture of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini stenciled on a wall. Women in headscarves and long coats take a seat on the left side of the synagogue. Men don skullcaps they pluck from a basket at the entrance and head for an empty seat on the right side.

An older man chants a prayer and invokes the name of

Jerusalem. Another voice joins in, then a third and a fourth. At the back of the synagogue, a pair of Persian carpets hangs alongside the cabinet that houses the Torah scrolls. The inscription in the silk threads proclaims in Hebrew: "This is a house of God."

As the sun sets and the sky darkens to the color of smoke, about 600 people have filled the synagogue. This night, as they have done for the past 10 years, the children gather on a platform in the center of the synagogue.

Their young voices rise up in prayer. They recite the verse earnestly and proudly. Their youthful enthusiasm stirs the crowd as they sing. "Come, my friend, to meet the bride: let us welcome the Sabbath."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Lurie's NewsCartoon

"An Apple a day keeps the competition away!"

(New Note: By investing \$150 million in Apple Computer, Microsoft's Bill Gates is promoting a huge boost for the aging computer maker while gaining a foothold in hardware manufacturing.)

21 AUGUST 1997

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The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 23-29 August

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Twinkle
2:30—Wishbone
3:00—Blue Heelers
3:30—World of Geo
4:00—The Vally Between
4:30—Till
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Ties that Bind
8:30—Prism
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Ellen

SUNDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Cartoon
3:00—Energy Express
4:00—American Chart Show
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30—National Geographic
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—One West Walkiki
11:15—Sisters

MONDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Cartoon
3:30—Gillette Sports Special
3:30—Deep Water Have
4:00—Animal Show
4:30—Ocean Girl
5:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Murphy Brown
8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Highlander



National Geographic, Sunday at 8:30 pm

10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Emergency Room (r)
11:15—Homicide

TUESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—French Programmes
3:00—Square Show
3:30—Dog House
4:30—The Album Show
5:15—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Coach
8:00—Till
8:30—Ecoounter
9:10—Nature of Things
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—West Beach
11:15—Mini Series

WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Cartoons
2:30—Global Gardner
3:30—Spell Binder
4:00—Monsters Today
4:30—Border Town
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Soldier's Diary
8:30—Oprah Winfrey Show
9:10—Spencer for Hire
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Land's End
11:00—American Gothic

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149):
The Lost World (Jurassic Park)
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149):
Liar Liar
- Plaza (Tel: 699238):
The Substitute
- Concord I (Tel: 677420):
Batman & Robin
- Concord II (Tel: 677420):
ACE Ventura 2 (When Nature Calls)

2:10—Cartoons
3:00—America's Funniest People
3:30—He Shoot He Scores
4:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—Parenthood
8:30—Lois and Clark (Superman)
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Step By Step

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—Cartoons
3:00—French Programs
4:00—Family Matters
4:30—NBA
6:10—French Film
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—The Health Show
8:30—Hawkeye (Drama)
9:10—Drama Series
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Mini Series
12:00—Feature Film

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI
5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Yacoutie
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
L'œil de Colomb

DIMANCHE
5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Magazine

Fait pas rêver
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine pour tous
Ziva

LUNDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Thalassa
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine scientifique
Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Captain Café
Emission de variétés
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Orient sur Seine

MERCREDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Magazine
Ushuaia
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Ziva

JEUDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Divertissement
Tarata
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Le dessous des cartes

VENREDI

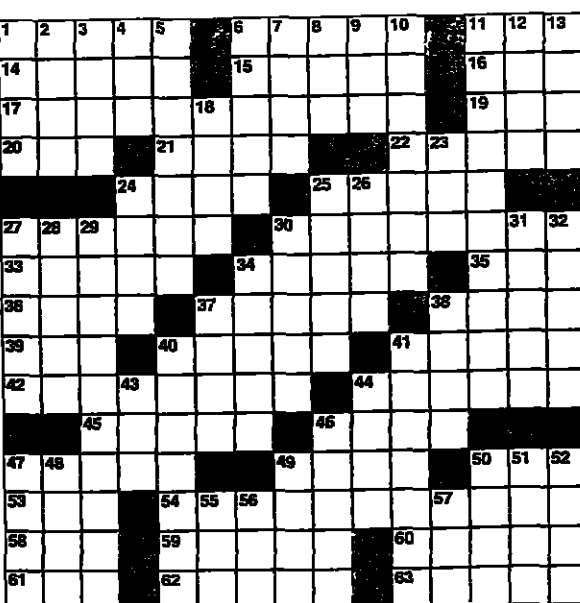
3:20—Divertissement
L'école des fans
5:30—Qual numéro 1 - 2/3
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Allo la terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV



A model shows off one of Yves Saint Laurent latest autumn 97/98 haute couture designs in Paris early this month.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Extrema
6 Jostle
11 Fling stat
14 Giant hunter of myth
15 Socialite
16 Media
17 Fussy woman
18 Blind
19 Building wing
20 Drunkard
21 Ballistic missile
22 Foolish
24 Oppenheim
25 Some grind
27 Runways through
30 Film producer, once
33 Caustic
34 Liquid measures
36 Food
37 regimen
38 Mushroom
39 du Diable
40 Tears down
41 Memorable
42 Hunted for pearls?
43 Thrash
44 Young toughs
46 Roughen
47 Threafold
48 Violist
49 Leopold
50 Tone-up
51 Felt
53 Grit
54 Actor
58 Actor
59 Uncanny
60 Turn inside
61 Grit
63 Clark's partner

DOWN
1 Sty denizens
2 Combo
3 Standby
4 Spare the
5 Like a necktie
6 Young toughs
7 Down
8 Young toughs
9 Lingerie item
10 Outdated
11 Gardeners, at times
12 Sowed
13 Just
14 "Afraid of
15 Simpson trial
16 Descended
17 Aride
18 Fashion magazine
19 Ham
20 Under My Skin
21 Taken on
22 Mithras's island
23 Veronica of "Hill Street Blues"
24 Looks
25 Escapade
26 Kind of pump
27 Aardvark
28 Goes back on a promise
29 Row
30 Wine cask
31 Close call
32 Sound
33 More adorable
34 Swam
35 Breathing
36 Large
37 Lardiness
38 Spit
39 The
40 Humiliated
41 and how
42 Mineral earth
43 Got You
44 Under My Skin

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—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: Details take on greater importance. The focus is on arts and crafts.

Aries (March 21-April 19). You're lucky in love. Make your move. Pay attention to the small stuff and the big stuff will fall into place. Don't get stuck in petty gripes.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Discuss financial matters with your friends. A conversation leads to true love. This one's a keeper.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Learn from and with your friends. Romance could be a byproduct. Discuss living arrangements. Have your sweetheart over for dinner.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Don't mess with money. Study the issues and fill out the forms. You'll know all the answers. A learning experience could lead to romance.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Be assertive. Don't take a financial risk. Reconcile your checkbook and do your accounting homework. If you don't have a budget, make one up.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Finish up old business. You're sharp. Ask for what you want. You look marvelous. Go shopping for luxury items. You'll find the perfect thing.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Friends and lovers come together. Return all your calls — one's very important. You're smart and cute. Make the most of it.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Pull some strings behind the scenes to get what you need for your home or family. A friend's path is blocked.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A friend and a foreigner, possibly the same person, can help you find the information you need.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Resist a friend's extravagant request. Practice a foreign language with a fascinating native. Romance could result.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Learn what you'll need to make a long-planned dream trip possible. Other people want to give you their money.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Take care with your work. Get a friend to proofread. Accept advice from a perfectionist. Put as much into savings as you can.

If You're Having a Birthday: This Week: Make bold plans and follow through on them meticulously. Keep close track of your money and you'll wind up with much more.

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Bridge

Why Finesse?
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ 6 5 2
♥ A J 9 5
♦ A 9 5
♣ K 6 5

WEST
♠ J 8 7 4
♥ 10 7 6
♦ 6 3
♣ A 8 7 2

EAST
♠ Q 10 9 3
♥ Q 3
♦ Q J 10 8
♣ J 10 4

SOUTH
♠ A K
♥ K 8 4 3
♦ K 7 4 2
♣ Q 9 3

The bidding:
North East South West
1♣ Pass 1♥ Pass
2♥ Pass 3NT Pass
4♥ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♠
It might seem that all South needed to land the heart game was a successful finesse for the lady and a 3-2 break. However, the contract was made despite the fact that the finesse was destined to lose, and there was nothing

the defenders could do about it. The auction is not without interest. Since North can raise hearts with only three-card support, South's leap to three no trump catered to that possibility. With good four-card support, North's correction to the suit game despite having no ruffing value has our unqualified endorsement.

West led a low spade, taken in the closed hand with the king. Declarer cashed the ace of spades, crossed to the ace of diamonds and ruffed a spade in hand. After cashing the king of diamonds, declarer exited with a diamond to East's jack. The defender could do no better than continue with the queen, ruffed on the table.

A club to the queen was taken with the ace, and West returned the suit to dummy's king. Declarer exited with a club, taken by East's jack. At this point, declarer was down to A J 9 of trumps in dummy and K 8 4 in hand. With the lead in the East hand, declarer was able to claim the last three tricks. Note that declarer made four hearts without taking a finesse or drawing even a single round of trumps!

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RALAV
RIFAR
TENTAX
WARIAY

Answer:

Answer: LARVA FEAR EXANT ARMY

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Would You Believe...

In our solar system, the planet Jupiter is larger than all of the other planets combined.

Famous frontiersmen Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett both died in the Battle of the Alamo.

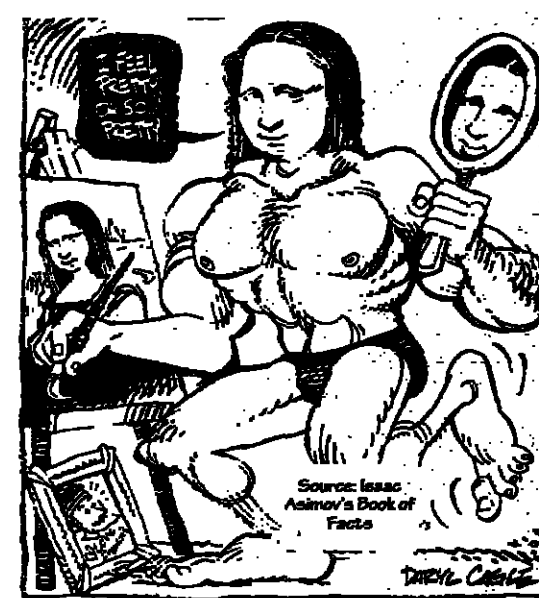
Just to prove that economists have always plagued us, consider that Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations" was first published in 1776.

Four of Franklin Roosevelt's sons served in the military during World War II.

Back in the early days of TV, entertainer Jack Paar once walked off his TV show because the network wouldn't let him tell a story about a toilet.

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TRUE! By Daryl Cagle



Leonardo Da Vinci was described by those who knew him as "the most beautiful man who ever lived."

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كنا من الفصول

Le Jourdain

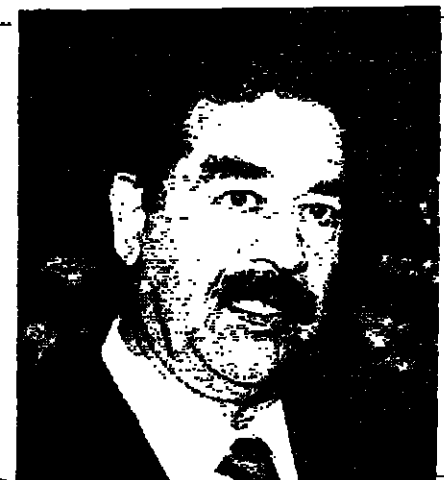
Supplément en français du Star

Les Iraniens bienvenus dans les lieux saints chiïtes d'Irak

Le président irakien Saddam Hussein (notre photo) a décidé d'autoriser les Iraniens à visiter les lieux saints chiïtes d'Irak, pour la première fois depuis le déclenchement de la guerre avec l'Irak en 1980. Selon un porte-parole officiel cité par radio-Bagdad, la direction irakienne a pris cette décision pour confirmer «sa bonne volonté à l'égard du peuple iranien», et ce «en dépit des obstacles» dans la normalisation entre les deux pays. Les relations irak-iran évoluent en effet en dents de scie depuis la fin de la guerre en 1988. L'Irak et l'Iran n'ont toujours pas signé de traité de paix, s'accusent régulièrement de violer les accords de cessez-le-feu et de bloquer l'échange des prisonniers de guerre, un dossier important qui gêne la normalisation.

La radio a indiqué que la décision entrerait en vigueur le 4 septembre prochain. Depuis 1980, les Irakiens n'étaient pas autorisés à se rendre en Iran et les Iraniens, en majorité chiïtes, ne pouvaient pas visiter l'Irak. Seules les délégations officielles des deux pays étaient autorisées à effectuer des visites réciproques. L'Irak abrite plusieurs lieux saints chiïtes, notamment le mausolée d'Ali, premier imam du chiïsme, à Najaf, et celui d'Hussein, troisième imam, à Kerbala (centre de l'Irak) ainsi que celui de Moussa al-Kazim, septième imam à Bagdad.

Dès juin 1996, le ministre iranien des affaires étrangères avait indiqué que des négociations étaient en cours entre les deux pays pour permettre aux Iraniens de venir en pèlerinage chez le voisin.



Justice

La balance pèse plus cher

Depuis un mois, un nouveau règlement juridique a été mis en place. Désormais les citoyens devront payer pour faire valoir leurs droits auprès des tribunaux. Une décision gouvernementale qui a provoqué un tollé parmi les associations, notamment l'Ordre des avocats.

Dès que le gouvernement a annoncé le 10 juillet dernier, une délégation de l'Ordre des avocats a demandé au ministre de la justice de reconsidérer cette décision. Trois semaines plus tard, l'Ordre reprend l'initiative en réclamant carrément la «suppression du nouveau règlement». De quoi s'agit-il exactement ? Selon le syndicat des avocats, les frais de tribunaux seraient augmentés de 33 à 200% en fonction des affaires traitées. Exemple : vous passez devant le tribunal pour un litige avec votre voisin, il vous en coûtera 1500 JD au lieu des 1000 habituels voire davantage.

Un gonflement jugé «exorbitant» et «injustifié» par l'Ordre. Pire : auparavant, les citoyens qui demandaient les services de la justice ne payaient qu'un timbre d'enregistrement du dossier, surtout quand il s'agissait de plaintes au préjudice léger. Désormais, toutes les affaires seront soumises à des taxes.

L'association des juristes jordaniens et l'association jordanienne des droits de l'homme ont exigé également l'abandon de cette nouvelle tarification qui a été décrétée dès 1994 mais qui avait été finalement «gelée» par le premier ministre, déjà à l'époque, Abdel Salam Majali - après de nombreuses protestations. Les deux associations ont rappelé que «l'accès à la justice doit être

gratuit ou maintenu au moins à des frais symboliques car il constitue l'un des droits fondamentaux de l'homme». Les nouveaux frais suscitent l'inquiétude chez les citoyens qui souffrent déjà de la vie chère», ajoutent les juristes, tandis que les défenseurs des droits de l'homme estiment également que le nouveau règlement ne tient pas compte du niveau de vie des citoyens.

Jamal Makaleh, fonctionnaire à Jérusalem, affirme qu'il est prêt à céder ses droits à son adversaire au palais de justice car il ne possède pas la somme des frais à verser au tribunal dans une affaire d'immobilier. L'avocat Mahmoud Smadi craint ainsi que les frais supplémentaires dissuadent les citoyens de porter plainte. Une attitude que la lenteur des procédures depuis longtemps controversée par les Jordaniens, encourage d'autant plus.

Dans une conférence donnée la semaine dernière par le ministre de la justice au Rotary club d'Amman, celui-ci a promis de «réexaminer les frais de tribunaux à la lumière des remarques formulées par l'Ordre des avocats» : un espoir que les citoyens soient entendus comme en 1994. ■

Suleiman Sweiss

Relations israélo-palestiniennes

Les Palestiniens survivent au blocus israélien

Depuis le double attentat-suicide de Jérusalem, les Palestiniens sont soumis à un blocus sans concession des Israéliens, qui veulent contraindre le gouvernement d'Arafat à se mobiliser contre les terroristes. Les conséquences sur la population sont nombreuses et de plus en plus dures à supporter.

Zaya Harbe a 19 ans. Elle est sur le point d'accoucher devant un barrage israélien en Cisjordanie. Elle a beau supplier avec son mari pour qu'on les laisse passer et rejoindre un hôpital, les militaires israéliens restent impassibles. Zaya a finalement donné naissance à un garçon devant le barrage, sans

conséquence pour l'enfant. Cet incident, qui a fait la une des journaux la semaine dernière, illustre à lui tout seul la dureté du blocus israélien imposé aux Palestiniens, concernant notamment la santé. Ainsi plus de 50 malades cardiaques ou cancéreux qui devaient recevoir des soins dans les hôpitaux de Jérusalem ou ailleurs en Israël,

n'ont pas pu s'y rendre.

De manière générale, les sanctions israéliennes ont durément paralysé la vie des Palestiniens. Ibrahim Rizk est journaliste, il a été obligé d'attendre plus de cinq jours à Rafah, poste-frontière avec l'Égypte : «Il y avait des milliers de femmes, d'enfants et de vieillards enlignés, coincés entre

les postes égyptiens et israéliens sans pouvoir rentrer à Gaza». Pour la plupart, ces gens sont venus des pays arabes pour passer des vacances en famille. Et ils se sont retrouvés là, à dormir en plein désert au milieu d'un été étouffant.

A Gaza, devant le ministère des affaires sociales, des femmes viennent à la queue leu leu chercher une aide urgente. L'une d'entre elles, les larmes aux yeux, jure qu'elle a vendu ses bagues de mariage pour acheter à manger. Son mari, âgé de 50 ans, est malade et ses deux enfants, qui travaillaient en Israël, ne peuvent plus y aller en raison du blocus.

Une association de bénévoles affirme dans une étude réalisée auprès de 300 familles que plus du tiers a vendu son or depuis le 31 juillet pour survivre. Dans le même temps, la nourriture s'épuise rapidement et le ministère de l'approvisionnement a notamment annoncé que la farine risquait de manquer sous dix jours.

Les enfants pourraient connaître cette année une rentrée des classes un peu spéciale, sans fournitures scolaires. Leurs pères qui ne peuvent plus aller travailler à Jérusalem, n'ont pas de quoi acheter des vêtements et des cahiers. Les magasins restent désespérément vides et les marchands de poulets ne sont pas à la fête.

Le blocus, c'est aussi l'interdiction de pêcher, ce qui a des conséquences directes sur l'approvisionnement des restaurants et des hôtels du bord de mer. De même les paysans regardent impuissants leurs produits pourrir dans les cartons faute d'être exportés.

Le secteur public est lui aussi touché pour la première fois depuis la création de l'Autorité palestinienne. La moitié du mois est passée et les fonctionnaires n'ont toujours pas été payés. Même régime de rigueur pour

les militaires. Lors du conseil des ministres palestiniens, il a été demandé à tous les ministères d'annuler leurs dépenses et le président Yasser Arafat déclare à qui veut l'entendre qu'il maintient ses territoires dans un état de mobilisation permanente. ■

De Gaza, Hassan Balawi

Tous les secteurs sont punis

Santé : Environ 30% des médecins et infirmiers de Cisjordanie n'ont pu se rendre sur leur lieu de travail. Le programme de vaccination a été stoppé et plus de 50 personnes n'ont pu recevoir leurs soins en Cisjordanie et en Israël.

Agriculture : Selon le ministère compétent, les pertes sont estimées à 2 millions de dollars pour l'exportation de fruits et légumes.

Transports : La circulation des camions, des bus et des taxis entre la Cisjordanie et Gaza a été arrêtée depuis le 31 juillet dernier, ce qui représente une perte quotidienne d'un million de dollars.

Tourisme : De nombreux touristes étrangers ont annulé leur séjour à Bethléhem et Jérusalem. Résultat : 100 millions de dollars perdus.

Emploi : Plus de 60.000 travailleurs des territoires palestiniens ne peuvent plus se rendre en Israël, ce qui porte le taux de chômage à 60%.

Finances : Plus de 60% des recettes de l'Autorité palestinienne sont bloquées par Israël qui empêche le transfert des taxes.

Pêche : Environ 5000 pêcheurs sont coincés au port.

Éducation : Retard de l'arrivée des fournitures scolaires et impossibilité pour les enseignants de préparer la rentrée. ■

H.B.



Un policier israélien empêche une femme palestinienne de pénétrer dans Jérusalem. Le blocus, malgré quelques allègements, reste très sévère.

Nouvelles du Pays

Protection civile

Le temps des Canadiens est encore loin

En Jordanie, les incendies de forêts sont moins fréquents qu'en France. Si les pompiers y sont tout de même confrontés, les techniques pour combattre les flammes restent limitées.



Un groupe de volontaires équipés de balais pour éteindre le feu. Les moyens utilisés sont parfois très rudimentaires.

C'est l'alerte générale. Dans leur belle combinaison orange, ils sautent, s'arment de casques et de tuyaux : la lutte commence. Puis après beaucoup d'efforts et de sueur, ils se contentent de dire qu'ils ont accompli leur devoir. Ce sont bien sûr les pompiers.

La Jordanie, comme partout ailleurs en engage des centaines. On y dénombre 83 centres de protection civile, qui dénombre chaque année près de 30.000 interventions. Les incendies en représentent environ 13%. Cela paraît peu mais ce chiffre est déjà élevé si l'on considère que le pays possède peu de grandes forêts. Quant aux dégâts, leur importance dépend des moyens mis en œuvre

pour arrêter les flammes. Dans l'immédiat, l'équipement des pompiers reste très ordinaire avec des camions-citerne et des lances à incendie. Quand les chemins sont difficiles, en travers d'obstacles qui empêchent l'arrivée des camions sur les lieux du sinistre, les pompiers ont recours aux outils les plus rudimentaires pour dégager la voie. De même, devant les flammes, ils font parfois appel à des volontaires, qui, armés de grands balais et de tuyaux d'arrosage de jardins, viennent les aider à lutter.

Le département de la protection civile cherche pourtant à travailler avec d'autres tech-

niques : «Nous avons établi un programme de coopération avec l'armée de l'air, annonce Ahmad Rahabieh, officier à la protection civile. Il s'agit d'utiliser des hélicoptères pour balayer de l'eau afin d'empêcher le feu de gagner les agglomérations, ce qui arrive parfois lorsqu'on utilise nos outils traditionnels». Du côté des hommes en revanche, les pompiers reçoivent une formation complète et le département organise des stages d'entraînement indispensables pour apprendre les gestes qui sauvent. ■

Nahed Al-Khlouf

Incendie en France

L'enfer aux portes de Marseille

Environ 2000 hectares de garrigue et 1800 hectares de pins d'Alep sont partis en fumée pendant le dernier week-end de juillet. Heureusement il n'y a pas eu de blessés et les maisons endommagées ont été peu nombreuses.



Pendant près de deux jours, les flammes ont dévasté la pinède marseillaise, laissant derrière elles un paysage apocalyptique.

Ce qui s'est passé

Le feu a pris dans une décharge municipale à quelques kilomètres au nord de la cité phocéenne. Un camion décharge des résidus industriels vite recouverts d'un peu de terre. Mais le mistral qui souffle à plus de 100 km/heure avec des rafales à 120, emporte un brandon. C'est le départ du feu qui file à travers la montagne vers le sud-ouest en dévorant la garrigue à plus de 2 km/heure de moyenne. «Il existe des couloirs de feu, explique un pompier. Des endroits où le feu est déjà passé et où les broussailles ont repoussé. Des études ont montré qu'il repassait toujours par là, dans ces terrains dégradés. C'est ce qu'il a fait. Il a suivi le chemin des incendies de 1989».

Pendant près de deux jours, plus de 2000 hommes, venus de quinze départements, ont lutté pied à pied contre les flammes, avec près de 400 engins et toute la flotte aérienne disponible, notamment les Canadair (avions équipés de réservoirs d'eau de mer). Quand le vent tombe enfin, plus de 36 heures après le début des hostilités, les pompiers parviennent à

contenir le feu. Il faudra cependant une bonne semaine pour que l'incendie soit définitivement éteint. Les spécialistes chiffrent à 40.000 francs à l'hectare le coût du reboisement, entretien compris.

Pourquoi un tel sinistre ?

L'enquête et la justice devront déterminer si les résidus déversés dans la décharge municipale de Septèmes-les-Vallons (nord de Marseille) étaient «chauds» ou pas, ou s'ils se sont auto-enflammés sur place, enfin quels types de résidus la décharge était-elle habilitée à recevoir.

La multiplication des lotissements et des maisons isolées au milieu des pinèdes a compliqué la tâche des pompiers qui ont été obligés de s'éparpiller dans la nature pour protéger les constructions.

Des couacs entre différents corps de pompiers (marins-pompiers de Marseille contre professionnels et volontaires du département) auraient retardé l'intervention. ■

Le Jourdain

Protégeons les forêts !

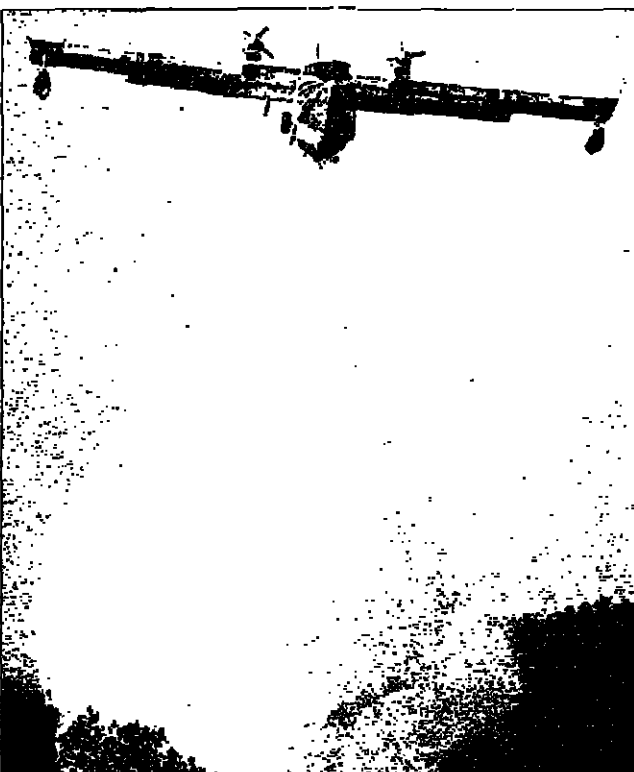
L'ignorance et la malveillance sont souvent à l'origine des feux de forêts. Malgré les campagnes de sensibilisation, l'éducation des Jordaniens pour la protection des forêts est encore à faire.

Une fois l'incendie passé, ce ne sont que des souches de désolation, des jardins et des forêts défigurés, des sentiers de promenade méconnaissables, des maisons détruites ou complètement démolies. À qui la faute ? Aux hommes le plus souvent. Crime, indifférence ou ignorance ? Les trois cas sont possibles, répond l'officier Ahmad Rahabieh, certains peuvent ne pas connaître les consignes de protection des forêts mais il y en a aussi qui feignent de les ignorer. Les incendies se déclarent surtout dans le

nord de la Jordanie près de l'Arabie saoudite, dans la région de l'Agout. C'est là que se trouvent les forêts de pins d'Alep, les plus précieuses de la région. En 1996, dans le sud il y a eu un feu, un feu s'est déclaré dans les montagnes de Jérusalem. Les causes sont nombreuses, souvent banales mais toujours très destructrices. «Beaucoup de gens jettent leurs mégots par terre, ils ne savent pas éteindre le feu, ils ne savent pas le protéger», réagit l'officier. Il y a aussi le problème des pyromanes, ceux qui provoquent volontairement des feux pour obtenir du charbon en

espérant le revendre à un bon prix. «Jusqu'à présent, nous lançons des campagnes d'information pour que les gens prennent conscience de l'importance de la protection des forêts», assure Ahmad Rahabieh. L'année dernière, si la campagne de prévention était à la télévision, il reste encore beaucoup à entreprendre, notamment contre les incendies criminels, où le manque de surveillance et de répression policières ne serait pas superflus. ■

N.K.



Les Canadairs déversent plusieurs tonnes d'eau sur le feu.

India, Pakistan revel, reflect on 50th anniversary of independence

By Kenneth J. Cooper

NEW DELHI, India—India and Pakistan, separated at a violent birth, celebrated a half-century of independence with fireworks, flag ceremonies, marches and speeches by leaders who called upon each nation to do more to help its impoverished masses prosper.

Though created at the same moment, Pakistan observed independence day Thursday and India last Friday, a sign of the continuing estrangement between two countries that share a common history but have distinctive cultures and languages. Their 50th anniversary marks

not only their emergence from colonial rule after a prolonged nonviolent campaign led by Mohandas K. Gandhi, but the explosion of communal violence that killed hundreds of thousands when British India was partitioned into Hindu and Muslim states.

Ceremonies in both nations were tinged with public disappointment that self-governance has not attacked social problems more forcefully and has imposed an onerous degree of official corruption.

The day also brought violent reminders of underlying tensions in each country: Pakistani police fatally shot two specta-

tors after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif delivered a speech at the tomb of Pakistan's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in the port city of Karachi, and separatist rebels in India's northeastern state of Assam bombed a passenger train, killing at least seven.

At a midnight session of Parliament, India replayed the famous speech Jawaharlal Nehru made at a similar session 50 years ago, in which he said independence fulfilled "a trust with destiny." He became India's first prime minister and established a political dynasty that would see his daughter Indira Gandhi and grandson Rajiv Gandhi also serve as premier.

"There is one difference between then and now. The difference at that time, everybody was very happy," said Ranbir Singh Chaudhary, a member of the assembly that wrote India's first constitution who was present for Nehru's speech. "Today, there have been shortcomings in implementation. We are disappointed with our leaders."

President K.R. Narayanan, the first former unattachable to occupy the largely ceremonial post, acknowledged in his speech to Parliament that India has failed to achieve Nehru's goals of eradicating poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality.

He also suggested that the government cannot do so by itself and called for "social movements" to combat these problems as well as population growth, environmental degradation and corruption.

"But we ought not to underestimate our achievements," Narayanan said. "India is today a considerable industrial and technological power of the world and promises to be an economic giant in the 21st century."

Twenty-four hours earlier, in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, Sharif addressed a midnight session of the National

Assembly and urged Pakistanis to unite in the kind of "tolerant and democratic" state that Jinnah envisioned.

"Let's make a pledge today that we will not only look toward ourselves and the present, but that the objective of our efforts and performance will be the creation of a developed and prosperous Pakistan for our coming generations," Sharif said.

Hundreds have been killed in ethnic violence in recent months in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, and in sectarian battles in Punjab, its most populous province. The economy has remained in precarious shape because of a double burden of heavy debt and defense spending.

Two-thirds of Pakistanis interviewed in a poll conducted for the nation's largest newspaper, *Jang*, said they feel sad on the anniversary. Ninety percent said the country's leaders never met their expectations, and 77 percent said they routinely have to bribe officials to get them to do their jobs.

Two prominent Pakistanis cited the 1971 secession of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and persistent social problems as other reasons for sadness.

"There is nothing to celebrate on the golden jubilee anniversary," said Abdul Sattar Edhi, Pakistan's foremost social worker. "We lost half of the country in the first 50 years. Whether the other half will survive through the next 50 years is a difficult question to answer."

Nur Khan, a former chief of Pakistan's air force, said defense spending must be substantially reduced because "unless we divert our resources to literacy and health, the historian is ready to write our obituary."

In Delhi, Sahib Singh Verma, the equivalent of the Indian capital territory's governor, said the celebrations were intended to "rejuvenate patriotic feelings" and make residents "sense the



presence of the spirits of the great sons of India."

But many Indians sounded as disgruntled as their Pakistani neighbors, and for some of the same reasons.

"Our leaders have let us down. We are a country full of scams now. How can I feel patriotic?" said Kusum Bhagat, an executive in a government-owned company.

"Big people will celebrate," Mangat Ram, a laborer on a road project, said. "We are poor. We have to work hard. Where is the time to celebrate?"

Several media have used the phrase "50-50" to describe the mix of achievements and failures in India's first half-century.

"There are problems, but I'm still

proud to be Indian," said Anju Saraswat, 41, who with her three sons watched laser shows and a march of 15,000 in Delhi.

Leaders of India's lower-caste majority complained that the ceremonies and extensive media coverage about them ignored the overpowering issue of caste.

Kanshi Ram, a major political leader of former untouchables—now known as dalits, or the down-trodden—said that the lower castes were "dependent on feudal lords before independence and on neo-feudal lords" since 1947.

"How can India be independent when the majority is dependent?" he asked.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



By Daniel Williams

MOSCOW—Everything on the computer screen in front of Vasily Tsibliev, commander of the Mir space station, looked in order on the day of the collision in June.

The data showed the Progress cargo craft approaching the station at the right pace. Tsibliev had the proper amount of time to line up for docking. But his fellow cosmonaut, Alexander Lazutkin, peered out the window and saw it differently. He turned to Tsibliev to say he thought the cargo craft was already dangerously close.

Bitter cosmonaut defends actions on space station

"The screen said we had plenty of distance, so I calmly continued," Tsibliev said. "Then I felt the crash."

Tsibliev's account, given during a news conference here last Saturday, was the first public description by the cosmo-

naut of the dramatic 25 June collision, which endangered the lives of Mir's crew and raised questions about Russia's 36-year-old human space program. The Mir commander gave a spirited and sometimes embittered defense of his performance during what proved to be a calamitous six months in space. Having kept Mir aloft, he is now trying to salvage his professional reputation, and he did not hesitate last Saturday to name a wide range of targets to blame.

Tsibliev's role has become the stuff of controversy in Russia. At one point last week, President Boris Yeltsin cited "human error," meaning Tsibliev's, as being responsible for the crash. Newspapers have published several unflattering descriptions of Tsibliev: the most recent, in the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, labeled him a "battering ram" and, apparently, a reference to his personality as well as the collision.

"Perhaps many wanted us to return as corpses, thinking that would have been great. Thank God everything turned out as it should have," Tsibliev said.

Behind the issue of scapegoating stands a larger question: whether Russia can maintain a first-class space program in a time of economic hardship, budget shortages and general disarray in the government and society.

This is a matter of pride as well as science. For all its problems, Mir is the world's only space station, and its venerable hull has sheltered cosmonauts for 11 years. As an orbiting laboratory used by visiting foreign space travelers, it makes money. After a series of mishaps in other aspects of the Russian program, Mir is also Russia's primary toehold in advanced space research, and it is one of the last symbols of Russia's fading status as a superpower.

Tsibliev's passionate self-defense offers a rare acknowledgment of the emotional side of space travel. Does the veteran cosmonaut enter the pantheon of heroes that stretches back to Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space? Or is his name to become synonymous with hard luck at best, or incompetence at worst?

He was in no mood Saturday to take the fall. The troubles with Mir, Tsibliev said, reflect the troubles faced by Russia in the years since the collapse of the Soviet Union. "The cause lies with problems on Earth," he said. "It's connected with the economy, with our affairs in general. Even the equipment needed to live aboard the station and that we requested to be sent and we're not talking about coffee, tea and milk—they just don't exist."

"The factories don't work, or have insufficient supplies, or

they ask for, excuse me, crazy prices."

Criticism of the crew was unfair, he said sharply. "It has been a long tradition here in Russia to look for scapegoats. Of course it is easier to put all the blame on the crew."

His comments seemed to be a direct slap at Yeltsin. At the end of the news conference, a moderator went out of his way to read aloud a congratulatory, welcoming message issued by Yeltsin when the cosmonauts landed Thursday.

Tsibliev had flown on Mir once before, for six months in 1993-94. But this trip was far more hazardous. In February, a fire broke out when the cosmonauts changed an air filter. A docking mission failed in March. Oxygen generators failed twice, there were problems with the water supply, and a cooling system breakdown sent temperatures to 90 degrees Fahrenheit for a time.

The June crash cut Mir's power supply by half and left Spektr, one of its six modules, punctured and airless. In July, someone accidentally pulled a computer plug, shutting down guidance systems and power. Tsibliev suffered from an irregular heartbeat, was put on medication and was told to rest.

The string of mishaps did not end when the cosmonauts left Mir last Thursday. Tsibliev revealed that re-entry of the Soyuz space capsule was not flawless. "The soft landing engines didn't work, and we hit the ground very hard," he said.

He added that it was fortunate that as the capsule parachuted to Earth, neither he nor Lazutkin was sitting in the right-hand chair, which bore the brunt of the landing.

Tsibliev declined to entirely write off Mir. "I can't be said that the station is now dying. But it's already old. It's been flying now for a long time," he said.

Mir is now in the hands of a replacement crew, cosmonauts Anatoly Solovoyev and Pavel Vinogradov. They are scheduled to reconnect electric cables running from Spektr's energy-supplying solar panels to the rest of the station soon.

US astronaut Michael Foale is also aboard. He has been aloft for about three months and will return to Earth in September when his replacement, David Wolf, arrives aboard the space shuttle Atlantis.

Tsibliev looked pale and Lazutkin somewhat hollow-eyed at the news conference, but they occasionally smiled and wisecracked. Downstairs, a children's choir sang songs of welcome and a band struck up, incongruously. "New York, New York."

The mood in the auditorium was mostly sour, however. Half of the 30-minute briefing was devoted to countering published accounts of Mir's misadven-

tures and the negative tone of some Russian reporting. "It hurts to read an unobjective report and open lies about yourself. Why should the media lie?" Tsibliev asked. "It has hurt our family and friends."

Tsibliev refuted a claim that he ran to the window just before the crash, abandoning the controls. He also denied that he took an unauthorized nap with the aid of sleeping pills. His account of the collision emphasized the heroism of the entire crew.

"We didn't think about jumping ship, although in principle, we were obliged to throw everything aside and race into the space capsule," said Tsibliev.

In the end, "I have even more questions than you about the collision," he said. "Tsibliev said he was especially frightened by the failed docking attempt in March, when the Progress cargo ship whizzed by Mir, nearly missing it. 'Only a fool is not scared,' he said."

The cosmonauts declined to shed light on one of the more curious mishaps—the inadvertent pulling of the plug from a main computer that for a time paralyzed Mir's life-support and guidance systems. "Maybe it would make you feel better to give you the name. But that's not the issue," said Lazutkin, the mission engineer. "We want to discuss it with specialists."

Outside, a cold rain fell and the orchestral celebration ended. Two associates of the cosmonauts, test pilots Boris Popov and Anatoly Kolmogorov, discussed their friends' plight.

"What happened happened, and someone will have to pay. Every department will want to whitewash itself. Our confidence is with the cosmonauts," said Popov.

Latest development show a computer breakdown aboard the Mir space station last Monday forced Mission Control to call off a vital spacewalk to repair the crippled complex, and left it drifting in "chaotic flight" and losing precious power.

The latest misfortune to befall the world's only working space station has cast further doubt on whether Mir can be salvaged. Ironically, the failure of the space station's central computer coincided with a successful manual docking of a Progress supply capsule that suggested human error—not a technical malfunction—as the culprit in the accident nearly eight weeks ago.

But Mir fell out of proper orientation with the sun shortly after the docking, depriving the already energy-starved station of replenishment of its solar batteries.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

In the very beginning

Physics has it that the universe originated in a "Big Bang" about 10 to 15 billion years ago. Since then the universe has continually expanded

By A.C. Grayling

STORIES ABOUT the origins of the universe are called "cosmogonies." Every society has one, usually as a component of its religion. Some invoke the creative agency of a deity, or the copulation of Chaos and Night, or the cracking of a cosmic egg. Their oddity is that they do not question what explains the existence of cosmic eggs or deities in the first place. And that is the grand mystery: how did anything at all come to be?

Astonishingly, science in our century has tackled that question, and come up with extraordinary answers. Alan Guth is one of the leading scientists in this field, whose work has had a revolutionary influence. He addresses the hardest cosmological question: given that the laws of physics say matter can neither be created nor destroyed, how could it come into existence? And how, from its beginnings in nothingness, did the universe become so large?

Physics has it that the universe originated in a "Big Bang" about 10 to 15 billion years ago. Since then the universe has continually expanded; everywhere one looks in the sky galaxies are receding, like raisins in rising dough moving apart from each other the further away they are, the faster they are moving.

One puzzle about the Big Bang is how, if the universe has expanded smoothly from its initial fireball, did stars and galaxies form? Inspection of the Big Bang's leftover radiation suggested at first that matter should be evenly distributed. But the universe is "lumpy," visible matter has aggregated into stars and galaxies, with what seem like vast tracts of emptiness between. How did this happen?

A recently offered answer is that visible matter represents only one percent of the universe's true mass, the rest consisting of "dark matter." Belief in the existence of this mysterious stuff is not prompted by experimental results; it is demanded by pure mathematics. But "dark matter" theorists predicted that investigation would reveal irregularities in the Big Bang's leftover radiation: and just such irregularities were detected by a NASA satellite in 1992.

But this work only intensifies the puzzle of how the Big Bang itself happened, and how it quickly produced so much visible and invisible matter. In 1975 the physicist William Tryon suggested that the universe began as a "quantum fluctuation." Almost anything can happen in a vacuum which according to quantum theory is not a quiet nothingness but a tumult of subatomic events. For example, a motor-bus could suddenly appear in one (although the chances are very tiny). Tryon surmised that the universe came about in exactly that way: a spontaneous quirk in nothingness. Bizarre as the idea seems, it is perfectly consistent with the laws of physics.

But Tryon's hypothesis does not explain why the universe grew so large. This is where other contributions, including Guth's, figure. Guth gave the Big Bang theory a new twist by putting forward his "inflationary universe" theory, suggesting how, in the first incredibly tiny fractions of the first split-second of the universe's existence, an immense quantity of matter was formed, expanding the universe by a factor of 10²⁵ or more. After postulating this stupendous spurt of Guth's theory allows the universe to continue as described in the

standard Big Bang model.

Understanding Guth's proposals requires a lot of background, which he therefore provides and with great lucidity. It is stimulating to have a first-hand account of these exotic and imaginative speculations about the world's beginnings, an account which amounts to a very readable history of recent cosmological theory.

Guth's suggestions have proved "immensely fruitful" since the publication of his ideas a decade ago, over 200 papers have appeared each year suggesting different versions of "inflation." The core insight remains: that the whole universe could emerge, almost instantly, from the tiny seed of a vacuum fluctuation, given some exciting possibilities about the geometry of space, "Higgs fields," "supercooling," solutions to problems about monopoles and other exotica and much besides.

Universal inflation can be likened to doubling grains of wheat on a chessboard's squares, starting with one grain on the first square, two on the next, four on the third, and so on: by the 64th square the number of grains required exceeds 9,000,000,000,000,000 (2 to the power 63). Describing the actual process is not so easy: it involves piecing together the intricacies of theories in both quantum and relativity physics.

As popular accounts of recent science go, this is not one of the simplest tomes, but for that reason is all the more educative. Guth does not record a finished effort, but work in progress; in one of the most fascinating and fundamental fields of human enquiry. It handsomely rewards study.

Financial Times Syndication

ROCK TRACKS

By Stacy Jenel Smith

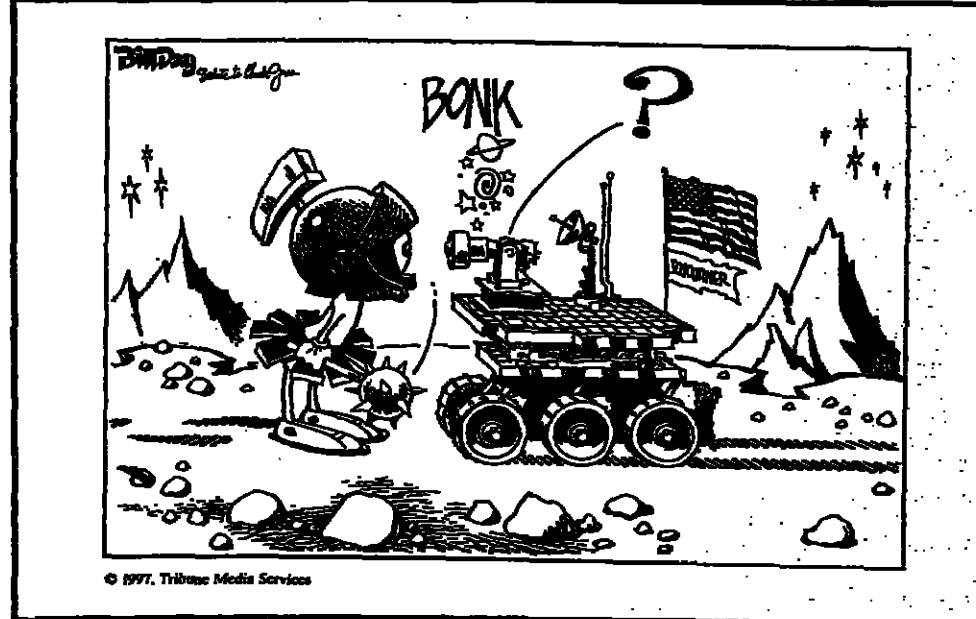
Duran Duran's "Electric Barbarella" video almost wound up even more strange than it is. "Barbarella," the vintage sci-fi movie, a favorite of the Duran Duran boys, who even named their group for the character Jane Fonda is trying to find in the picture. Anyway, the video features band members Simon Le Bon, Nick Rhodes and Warren Cuccurullo taking home their own android babe and playing around with her. Then she goes haywire and starts electrocuting everyone she kisses. What viewers won't see is a scene in which she gets too friendly with a curling iron. They decided that was a bit much and cut it out. "Electric Barbarella" is the first single off Duran Duran's forthcoming "Medazzaland" album, which is due in October.

Sophie B. Hawkins has headed back into the studio to record her next album with Grammy-winning producer Peter Asher. "The album is due in the fall, so there's a tremendous amount of pressure, which I like," says Hawkins. "There are about 30 songs and we've chosen the 12 that will go on the disc." Hawkins says the new CD will be titled "Angels Get My Mansions Ready." "It comes from a hymn. I read it on a tombstone in the oldest slave cemetery in America in Georgetown."

Reports of a Police reunion are premature, to say the least. Says drummer Stewart Copeland, who was quoted recently as saying he "wouldn't rule out a reunion" for himself, Sting and Andy Summers. He now clarifies that a reunion tour is something "I'd like to see happen, but there have been no discussions and no tour is being booked." Meanwhile, the multi-Grammy winning composer/producer of such film scores as "Wall Street," "Talk Radio" and the just-released comedy, "Good Burger," is releasing his first solo album, "From Rumble Fish to Gridlock'd." He describes it as "a greatest hits of all my film scores." And he's joining the growing list of artists—including the artist formerly known as Prince—intent on selling their product solely on the Internet. "It's a brave new world out there. It's now possible for artists to market their own music, which means that instead of getting 15 percent of a record, you get 100 percent."

Sax man Dave Koz admits his PBS pledge drive special—"Dave Koz: Off the Beaten Path, Live From Trinidad"—was done without benefit of the kind of budget Yanni or John Tesh have had to work with. "But from the moment we got there, it was as if everyone was trying to help us," says Koz. For instance, "My keyboard player uses a Hammond B-3 organ, which is very large. It would have cost about \$5,000 to transport one over, so we didn't. Then we heard there was no organ on the island. Well, someone put an announcement on the radio: The Dave Koz concert needs an organ. Does anyone have an organ?" A church 300 miles away called and said "Yes," and they loaded this organ onto a truck and brought it down." Koz and his band had the assistance of local steel musicians, African and Indian drummers, plus dancers costumed and staged by Peter Minchell, whose credits include the Atlanta Olympic Games. And just after they finished the final number, "a torrential downpour broke—the kind that sends you running for cover. We were very lucky." Very.

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21 AUGUST 1997

W E E K E N D

THE STAR 11

Coffee-table books offer Versace's legacy of style



By Mimi Avins

THE TORRENT of media attention focused on Gianni Versace's slaying in Miami left most people who own a television set with an awareness of the designer, his princely lifestyle and the global reach of his empire. For those also interested in Versace's work, his legacy of style can be found between the high-gloss hardcovers of a striking series of coffee-table books.

The first kaleidoscope of distinctive Versace images, *Signatures*, was published in 1991 in conjunction with a Fashion Institute of Technology retrospective of the

designer's clothing. Mark Macgowan, general manager of Abbeville Press, Versace's publisher, said, "Gianni was very involved and he loved the whole publishing process. After the first one, he liked to have a new book ready every Christmas, and he'd give them as presents to all his friends."

Signatures, the most autobiographical, was followed by *Do Not Disturb*, *Vanitas: Designs, Men Without Ties* and *Rock and Royalty*, all boldly graphic compilations of advertising campaign outtakes, runway shots, Italianate still lifes, and campy nude gods and goddesses by Versace court photographers Irving Penn, Richard Avedon, Helmut Newton and Bruce Weber, with text by a variety of writers. *South Beach Stories*, by Gianni and Donatella Versace, was published only in Europe.

Royalties from the \$75 books were donated to charities. So while they weren't a profit-making proposition for Versace, "he knew that the books would be displayed and reviewed and get his name out there," Macgowan said. "It was very shrewd on his part, from a commercial point of view."

Signatures is out of print, but the rest of the Versace catalog has been selling briskly since his death. "In the last month, we've taken orders for about 20,000 books, the number we would normally have sold in six months," Macgowan said. They're available at bookstores.

Just before his death, Versace approved designs for *The Art of Being You*, which will be issued next spring. And *Do Not Disturb* will come out as a tiny folio, a 4-by-4 1/2-inch, \$12 paperback that is a miniaturized version of the original. It offers visions of a modern Italian paradise, juxtaposed with depictions of classic themes and Versace family photos, creating a romantic alternative to the sleazy *Suicide of a Serial Killer* paperback that is sure to hit the stands soon.

Financial Times Syndication

Elvis Presley

Needed dead or alive

By John Authers in Memphis, Tennessee

TELL ALMOST any Memphian that you are in town for the 20th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death, being celebrated with great pageantry in the city this week, and you get the same response: "I'll tell you something about Elvis: he's dead. Deader'n a door-nail."

Local exasperation and distaste with the quasi-religious cult that has developed around Memphis's most famous resident since his death is never far from the surface.

An obviously satirical news item in this week's Memphis *Flyer*, a local newspaper, reads: "A Flyer Exclusive: Elvis Is Dead."

Rock 103FM, one of the more popular local radio stations, holds a competition each morning where the reward for the caller whose joke is in the worst taste is a bath mat with a chalk outline of the singer's body as he was found, bent double on a toilet floor.

This seems unfair. Elvis Presley Enterprises, which represents the singer's estate, has attracted massive new tourism revenues to Memphis since it wrested control over the rights to Elvis' name and image from his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, in the early 1980s.

Graceland, Elvis' mansion, was opened to the public in 1982, and is now one of the nation's chief tourist attractions. It employs 300 people, swelling to 500 for the peak season.

The organisation now runs seven separate souvenir shops in a campus across the highway from Graceland, which sell a huge range of gifts, such as a replica Elvis driving licence with an "expiry date" of August 16 1977. The organisation does not release sales figures, but business this week, with 50,000 people going through the turnstiles, looks brisk.

Graceland has also stimulated extra tourism revenue nearby, with local hotels offering such attractions as "24-hour Elvis movies in every room", and a "guitar-shaped swimming pool".

However, the estate, which has developed a formidable reputation for protecting Elvis' name in the courts, works independently of both public and private sector organisations.

The Overton Shell, a big outdoor amphitheatre where the young Elvis gave his first concert in the city, and backed by one of the prettiest parks in Memphis, now stands as the strongest symbol for the area's unwillingness to co-ordinate efforts to protect its heritage.

Pressed into service this week as a concert venue, the shell is overgrown, with grass under the seats and weeds covering the concrete. The one public telephone does not work. Neither local public bodies, nor the Presley estate, contribute anything to its upkeep.

According to Mr Vernon Chadwick, a local professor and author of a book on Elvis, who is leading the campaign to keep the Shell open: "I'm afraid Memphis has a long record of failing to respect and realise the value of its history. The joke is that if you want a tour of the historic sites in Memphis, you end up visiting a series of parking lots."

He added: "We've tried not to involve Elvis Presley Enterprises too much because they have a tendency to control everything once they become involved."

visitors, but its convention bureau tends to emphasise blues artists, rather than singling out Elvis.

Thus its present slogan is "Home of the Blues. Birthplace of Rock n' Roll", which gives equal precedence to the local blues musicians, such as B B King, who tend to give rise to as much local pride as Elvis. The previous slogan was: "Give me Memphis, Tennessee", borrowed from a Chuck Berry song.

The centre of private sector efforts to revive the city's downtown is Beale Street, where many of the nation's best known blues venues were knocked down in a previous attempt at urban renewal. New restaurants and clubs are opening, and crowds fill the street into the small hours, a phenomenon unmatched elsewhere in the south outside New Orleans.

But again, there is ambivalence towards a new entrant: Elvis Presley's Memphis. Planned to be the start of an international chain of about eight restaurants, it was opened by the singer's estate last month.



It features plenty of Elvis memorabilia, in a formula reminiscent of the Hard Rock Cafe, and serves southern cuisine, concentrating on Elvis' favourite dishes, such as deep-fried banana-and-peanut-butter sandwiches.

The place has been packed ever since it opened, but locals still seem unimpressed, preferring B B King's club, which almost faces it across the street and, in an attraction its rival cannot match, often features live music by its founder.

The *Flyer*, despite taking its dig at the fanatics, suggests in its leader that readers should appreciate the economic impact which the Elvis industry has had on

the city. Pointing to the city's downtown revival, it says: "Arguably, none of these changes would have happened without tourism and most of that tourism is clearly generated from Memphis's musical legacy. And Memphis's musical legacy, like it or not, is most notably defined by the rest of the world as Elvis Presley."

It concludes that Memphians dining out downtown should raise a glass to Elvis and say: "Thank yuh, thank yuh verra much."

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The race to 'Zero Administration' cost:

Which Technology?

By Jabra F. Ghneim

Special to The Star
SINCE GARTNER group published its famous report on the cost of owning PCs, the world hasn't been the same. The group estimated the cost to be between \$8000-16000 annually. The costs include those for troubleshooting, programs, installation, maintenance, and training staff.

In response, concerned companies have moved quickly to reduce that cost. Industry giants such as Microsoft, Sun, Oracle, and many others are in a fierce war with each other trying to impose a standard to reduce this cost.

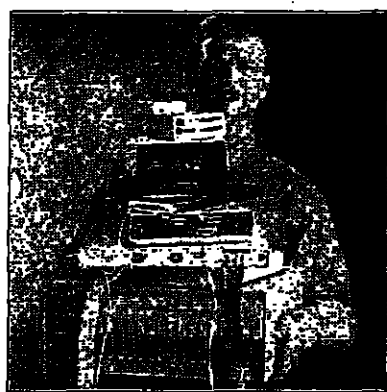
Then came the Java computer language; the industry started building the Network PC, which is a cheap and stripped down computer that uses a server to execute business applications. The core of Java is the JVM, or the Java Virtual Machine.

The JVM translates computer instructions into bytecodes that any processor or any operating system can understand. Thus programmers can write their programs once and deploy them everywhere and on any platform. Java programs are called applets. These are small programs that reside on the server, from which users can download them for execution locally on a Network Computer. All code and configuration information relating to the user are stored and managed centrally, which reduces the cost of managing networks.

Second, the inclusion of a JVM on the server means that

all clients and the server may be programmed as a single homogenous platform—the Java environment—with consistent tools, training, and documentation.

Sun Microsystems, the owner and inventor of Java, is trying hard to impose it as a



standard, with the vision.

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Internets and Intranets are certainly fulfilling this vision before our eyes.

Microsoft, fearing the end of its dominance in the operating systems market, embraced Java. It even developed its own 'brew' of the Java language and a software development kit SDK for Java, which it put together with industry giants, such as Intel who have their own standard for the network computer known as NetPC. In addition, Microsoft made

up a component technology called ActiveX that allows programmers to write multi-platform programs, which can travel through the network and work on any PC.

Then the Zero Administration Kit (ZAK) emerged, which will be built into the Windows NT operating system.

Add to all that last week's exciting announcement from Microsoft and Marimba about a standard to distribute software using PUSH technology, Open Software Description (OSD). OSD creates a standard way to describe software components—their versions, their underlying structure and their relationships to other components. This would allow servers to automatically update and distribute software to workstations that need updating.

The server detects your system's needs then updates it automatically. I think more will come from Redmond, just wait and see, as I believe in the practicality of the Microsoft approach.

For us in the Arab Middle East, there still aren't any Java components supporting Arabic. Even though Java has been Unicode compatible from day one, many programmers will find it hard to write such a component. I think that Sun's model still needs a lot to mature and make it to the prime time.

On the other hand, Microsoft offers a full approach, addressing every aspect of network management and programming. In addition, Microsoft's

Computer & IT companies !!

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 648298 or email us at: StarNET@com.jo with your news and views.

Newsgroups, local content & local chat zones from Global One:
Added value for Global One customers

GLOBAL ONE, the first Internet Service Provider in Jordan, continues to provide low priced Internet access packages to its thousands of users in Jordan.

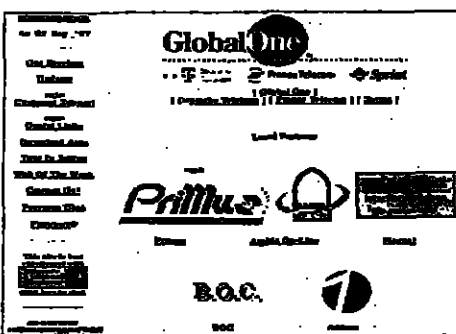
Subscribers to Global One receive much more than just Internet access, as they can utilize the many additional services delivered by Global One.

First, there's the access to newsgroups which only Global One offers in Jordan. Newsgroups are an important part of the Internet, covering all types of topics from business, to social issues, to computer-related topics and much more.

Naturally, there are so many newsgroups on the Internet, that it would take a typical user a very long time to search for them and locate the ones of benefit. This would mean the depletion of paid Internet hours.

Accordingly, Global One saves its subscribers the trouble of searching, and provides efficient access to a selected number of newsgroups which are very popular and amongst the most useful, covering a varied range of topics.

The newsgroups service from



Global One opens up excellent opportunities for commercial interchange with the outside world, and opportunities for exchanging views and consultations with expert groups from around the globe, who regularly make their contribution to these newsgroups. In other words, it's a useful addition to your business or personal life.

Secondly, Global One offers rich local content through its Web site (www.go.com.jo) where users can find all the top local content providers and Internet information organizations. Arabia One Line, the foremost source of Arabic information on the Internet, Primus, a leading local bulletin board service, BOC, Access,

Magnet and others are available to users at the simple click of a button. Immediately, a wealth of information on Jordan is made available.

Primus, in particular, provides an interesting aspect to users, as it enables visitors to the Global One site to check out what's going on in the Primus community that comprises hundreds of Jordanian users interacting. Normally, you

would have to subscribe to the service directly, and use a separate dial-up number.

Last, but not least, Global One offers users a local Internet chat zone, where users can interact and exchange views locally, using a separate dial up number, (691303), without depleting their Internet hours! By dedicating a server to the purpose of hosting the chat zone, users can access the service through a special software called Internet Relay Chat, which is available free.

According to Global One the idea is to "provide added value to customers, re-affirming Global One's commitment to stay ahead."

News update

'Backward file compatibility', not a problem in Arabic Office 97

Microsoft Middle East has announced that 'backward file compatibility' problems faced by English language Office 97

operating systems run 90% of the world's computers.

Microsoft has offered customers in the Middle East, for many years now, localized versions of its operating systems software. This means you won't have to try new and untested technologies on your precious systems.

All in all, I think the future is bright for all of us working with networks. I believe we will end up thanking the big sugar daddy in Redmond for it, namely Mr Bill Gates.

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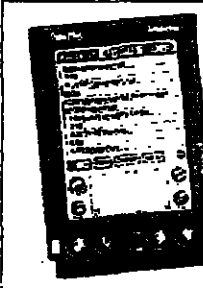
users are not going to be a problem for Arabic Office 97 users, as Microsoft has corrected this matter in consequent versions. So far, Microsoft customer testing for the beta version have shown that no users have faced any trouble in backward compatibility. As part of the statement issued by Microsoft Middle East, the company re-affirmed its commitment promptly responding to any issues related to 'migration' from one system to another. So far, response from users in the Arab world has been characterized as 'excellent' to Arabic Office 97.

Palm Pilot simplifies your life

The new Palm Pilot organizer has all the power and features you

need to organize your busy life. There's a date and address book with room for thousands of addresses and appointments. You'll find a to do list, a memo pad, a calculator, expense tracking and more. You can update information on the Palm Pilot or your PC using HotSync technology which synchronizes this data for you at a touch of a button. Wherever you go, it is easy to have all your important data and it's completely up-to-date. The Palm Pilot offers email functionality and is Internet ready (TCP/IP support).

For more information, contact Saudi Communication Systems (SCS) on telephone 605506.

INTERFACE
AND NASSERIt's official in Saudi Arabia:
Software piracy declared as 'Haram'

THE FIGHT against software piracy in the Middle East has taken on a new turn, with Saudi Arabia's religious authorities announcing that copying software without prior permission from its owners is 'haram'.

The Saudi Press Agency has distributed a news piece stating that the Permanent Committee for Scientific Research and Ifta has declared software piracy as 'haram', meaning that it is illegal for a Muslim to copy commercial computer software!

The result has been a stream of calls and inquiries from religious users in Saudi Arabia who are concerned that their practice of software copying is not in line with Islamic morals.

Apparently, many Saudi computer users are confessing to software piracy and are asking for pardon, by committing to purchase original software!

This development in Saudi Arabia will probably be followed by similar moves in other Gulf States, and possibly other countries in the region will follow.

This is good news for software publishers, who are extremely pleased that the 'immoral' aspects of piracy have finally been recognized as non-compliant with Islamic morals. It's a whole new line of defense against illegal copying and it could be the strongest deterrent so far.

Whether or not the Islamic authorities in Jordan will follow suit is still unknown, but one thing is for sure: the hunt for software pirates is on again and this time, it's 'religious'.

Flat displays, easier on the eye

ALMOST EVERY major computer monitor manufacturer has released or is currently developing its own flat panel monitor, to capitalize on the massive growth in this sector.

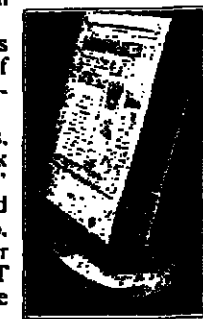
Compaq, Fujitsu, Philips and others have attractive flat panel models, all of which have been well received by computer users.

These are active matrix TFT screens, similar to screens found in notebook computers but with better 'visibility' features. They are easier on the eye and are said to be healthier for users. Also, flat panel monitors consume less power and produce less heat than regular CRT monitors, meaning that they are more environmentally friendly.

According to statements from experts in resolution technologies, the quality of images and accuracy of texts provided by a 14 inch flat panel monitor are comparable to those of a standard 17 inch monitor.

So, a smaller monitor screen, that occupies so much less desk space because it's thinner to begin with, can eventually eliminate the need for large monitors, mainly among users concerned in accuracy. Of course, artists and designers who benefit from 17 or 21 inch monitors to be able to see more of their designed images or documents, will stick to the larger models. Still, flat panel monitors are stylish and very attractive.

If they catch on, and start to make it into all sectors of computer use you can expect their prices to drop gradually, eventually enabling the normal home user, with a limited budget, to pay a little extra, to get a better, healthier and less space-occupying display.



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Germans count on Klinsmann

BELFAST—Jurgen Klinsmann has not scored a goal in the German colors for more than 10 hours but coach Berti Vogts is standing by his blonde-haired captain for Wednesday's World Cup qualifier against Northern Ireland here.

"I judge a striker differently," Vogts said on his arrival in the British-ruled province. "Not just on his goals. Every side needs leaders, frontline players, and that's Jurgen Klinsmann."

Playing in his last international campaign, with the incentive of a second World Cup medal to add to his trophy cabinet, Klinsmann is burning to break the drought and show his detractors that he deserves his cemented position in the German XI.

"It's normal that expectations grow when you don't score for a while. I'm familiar with this pressure," Klinsmann said. "I've been living with it for the last 15 years. I don't have a problem with it. The goals will come on their own, hopefully on Wednesday."

The last time he was able to celebrate a score on the international stage was October 9th 1996 in Germany's 3-1 over Armenia—exactly 604 playing minutes ago.

Quite aside from his failing goal instincts there is the issue of whether the Sampdoria Genua striker is match-fit. The Italian football season does not kick off until the end of August which has left the German captain—as well as Christian Ziege (AC Milan) and Oliver Bierhoff (Udinese)—just summer practice matches in which to hone their skills.

"I don't think that's a disadvantage," Klinsmann said. "We're all physically top fit regardless of whether we've been playing friendlies or real matches. Football is purely a mind thing. We've just got to pump ourselves up for it."

Germany are second in qualifying group nine, level on 12 points with Portugal who are third, and two points behind leaders Ukraine but with two matches in hand.

Northern Ireland, who coach Bryan Hamilton admits have no chance of reaching next year's World Cup finals, ought to be an easy adversary but the Germans have a long record of not coping with their physical brand of football.

The last time the European champi-

ons registered a victory over Northern Ireland was April 27, 1977 in Cologne, when they won 5-0.

In the two countries' last five clashes the Northern Irish have, astonishingly, won two and drawn three, most recently a 1-1 in Nuremberg last November which Vogts claims ought to have ended up in a 6-1 or 7-1 mauling.

Responding to calls for change after Germany's poor 0-0 draw against Ukraine two months ago, two stalwarts have been dropped from this week's squad.

Bremen's Dieter Ellis didn't even make last week's extended nomination while Stefan Reuter had his invitation revoked at the weekend after he failed to impress Berti Vogts in Dortmund's opening match of the season against Hertha Berlin.

Reuter, a 30-year-old veteran with 62 caps to his name, is insulted that he only found out about it from the television. "Someone who has played in various German national teams for the last 15 years has the right to be told news like that personally," Reuter told Monday's Westfalishe Rundschau newspaper.

"I'm totally surprised, enormously disappointed and at first was speechless."

Vogts however wants the team to know it is he who is running the show and passed on a curt reply to Reuter via his press conference.

"The players don't call me up after they've played poorly," he commented. "And sometimes players forget phone calls too. I wasn't happy with his form, that's a fact. End of story. Finish!"

One old favorite he will be sticking by is Thomas Haessler, back in the national side after a 10-month absence because of two broken ankles.

The tiny midfielder, known as Icke to his team-mates, is not fully fit yet but Vogts wants to slowly build him up again for next year's World Cup finals, also knowing that his re-emergence in the midfield may provide captain Klinsmann with the missing link on his way to goal.

"Icke Haessler is for me personally an important connecting player," Klinsmann said. "Over the years we've built up a good on-field understanding of one another, of the type I've only ever had with Rudi Voeller."

With or without Haessler though, the German captain does not have



Klinsmann

good memories of Belfast's Windsor Park which will be sold out on Wednesday.

Both he and Andreas Moeller missed penalties there on May 29 last year, generously allowing the Northern Irish a 1-1 draw.

This time round though Vogts says

there are no excuses. "I demand from national players more than just what is necessary. The time has come to beat them again. The players know what I expect. We want to start the new World Cup season with a good match and a win."

African World Cup qualifiers

JOHANNESBURG—Facilities of the five African qualifiers for the 1998 World Cup in France:

Nigeria
Qualifying results: Burkina Faso 2-0, Nigeria 2-1, Kenya 3-0 1-1, Guinea 2-0.

Coaches: Amekachi 4, Amekachi 2, Okeke, Okeke, Okeke, Okeke (Okeke Faso) own goal.

Coach: Traoré (France)
Previous appearance: 1994 second round.

Results: Rwanda 2-0 3-1, Liberia 2-0

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Manchester United throws Cantona souvenirs away

MANCHESTER, England—Manchester United have been forced to pulp tonnes of Eric Cantona souvenirs—including duvets and mugs—after the Frenchman made a claim for a substantial cut of the profit.

The memorabilia has all been binned following demands by Cantona for a 750,000 pounds (about \$1.1 million) slice of the proceeds relating to his merchandise.

"The supply of Eric Cantona stock was running down anyway. But we had it all destroyed before the deadline set between the club and Eric's advisers," club spokesman Ken Ramsden told the Daily Star.

"The items destroyed included pictures and posters. Anything connected with Eric."

The merchandise row appears to have tarnished the relationship between the club and player, who was instrumental in United's run of four Premiership titles in the last five years.

Cantona has been invited to a dinner at Old Trafford next month to celebrate the latest title triumph, but he has not yet indicated whether he will attend. It is believed the club will offer some compensation to Cantona for the money made using his name, although

United chief executive Martin Edwards stressed:

"We never stand in the way of a player making his own sponsorship deals, but obviously any profit made by the club on official merchandising is ours and not the player's."

Meanwhile, supporters of Manchester United, the richest club in the world, reacted angrily to the club's plans to launch a fourth playing strip, which the side will wear for their Champions' League games.

United already have red, blue and white kits and the fourth one is expected to be priced at 40 pounds.

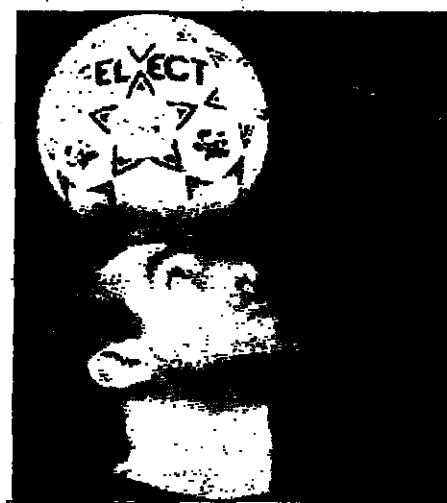
The Champions League strip is expected to be red, and if United fail to progress in the tournament would be worn for just six games.

Sheila Spiers, vice chairman of the Football Supporters' Association, condemned the move.

"It's over the top," she said. "Manchester United are certainly exploiting the market."

The shirts are often replaced after just one season and Spiers claimed this was wrong.

"They should stick to the two-year ruling, but for one reason or another they change their sponsor or kit manufacturer," she said.



Cantona

1-0, Kenya 3-0 1-1, Guinea 2-0.

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